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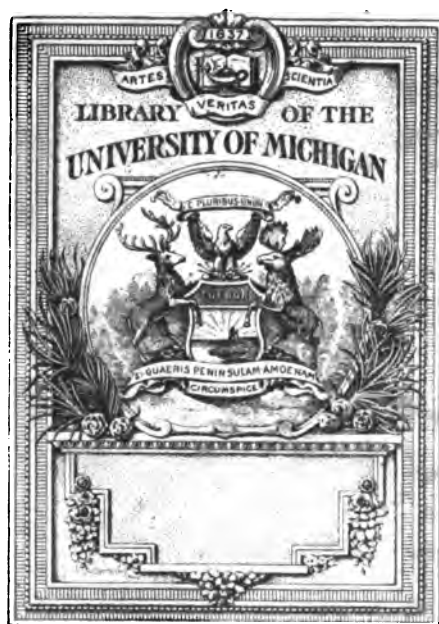
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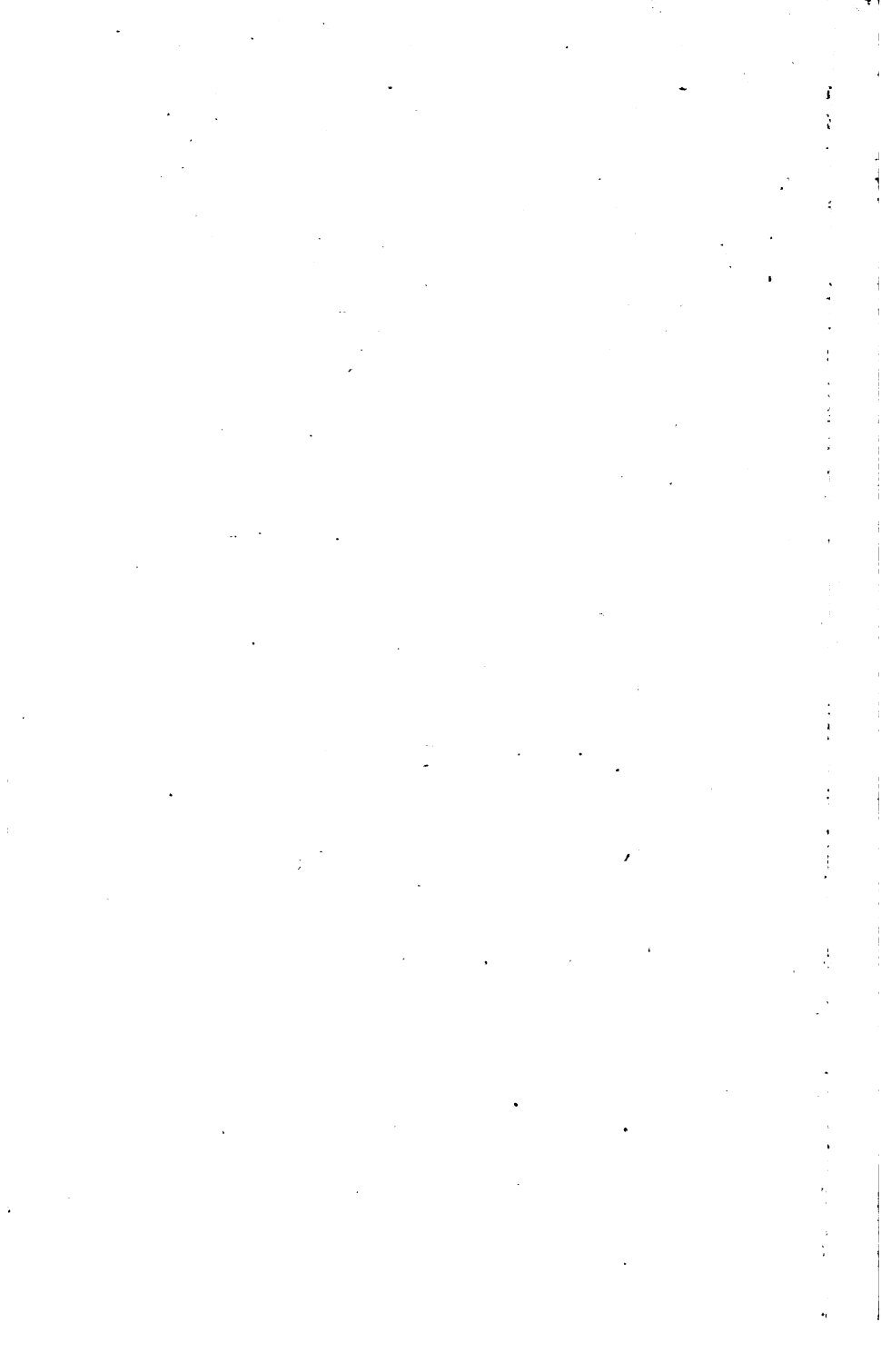
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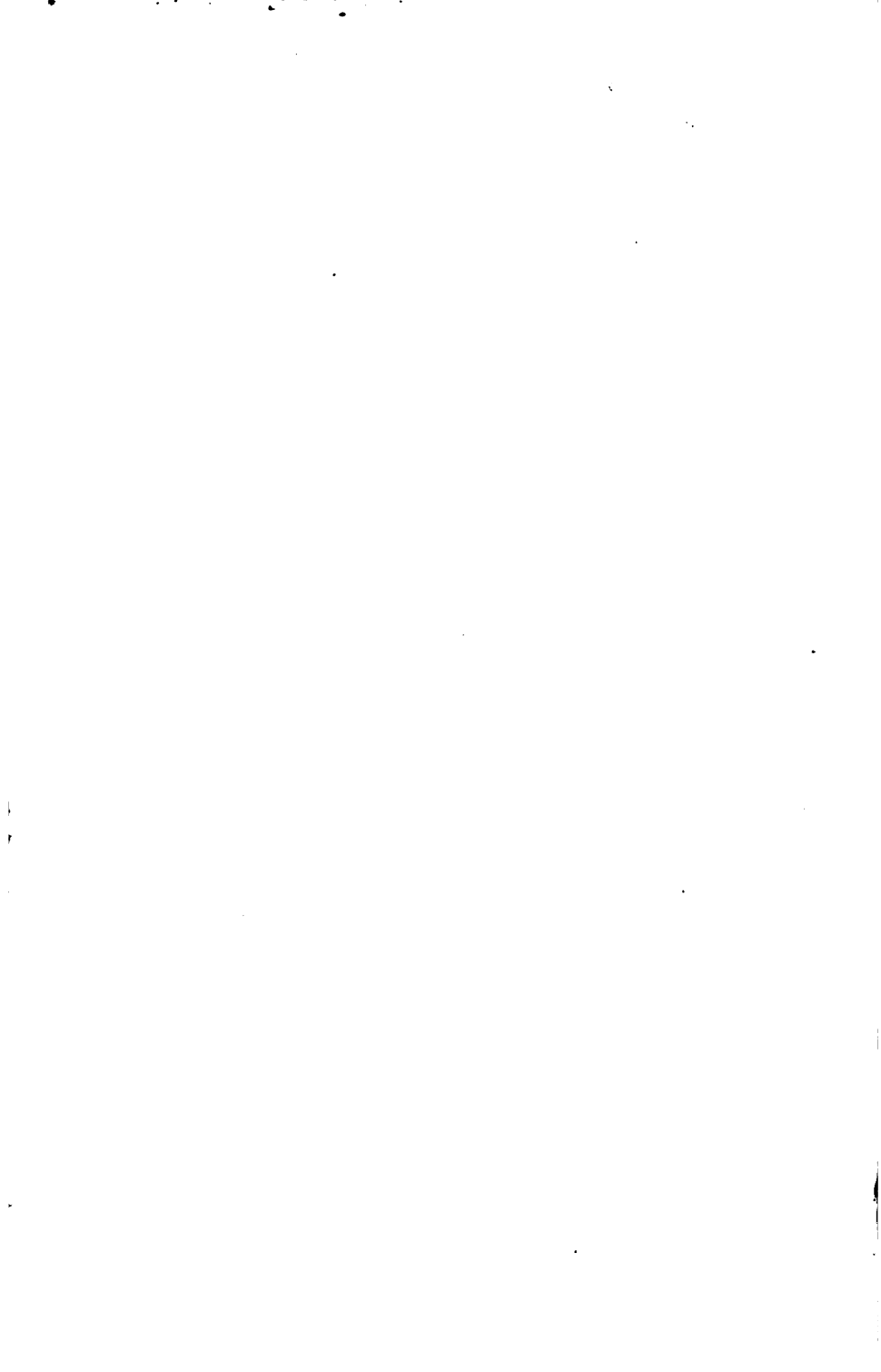
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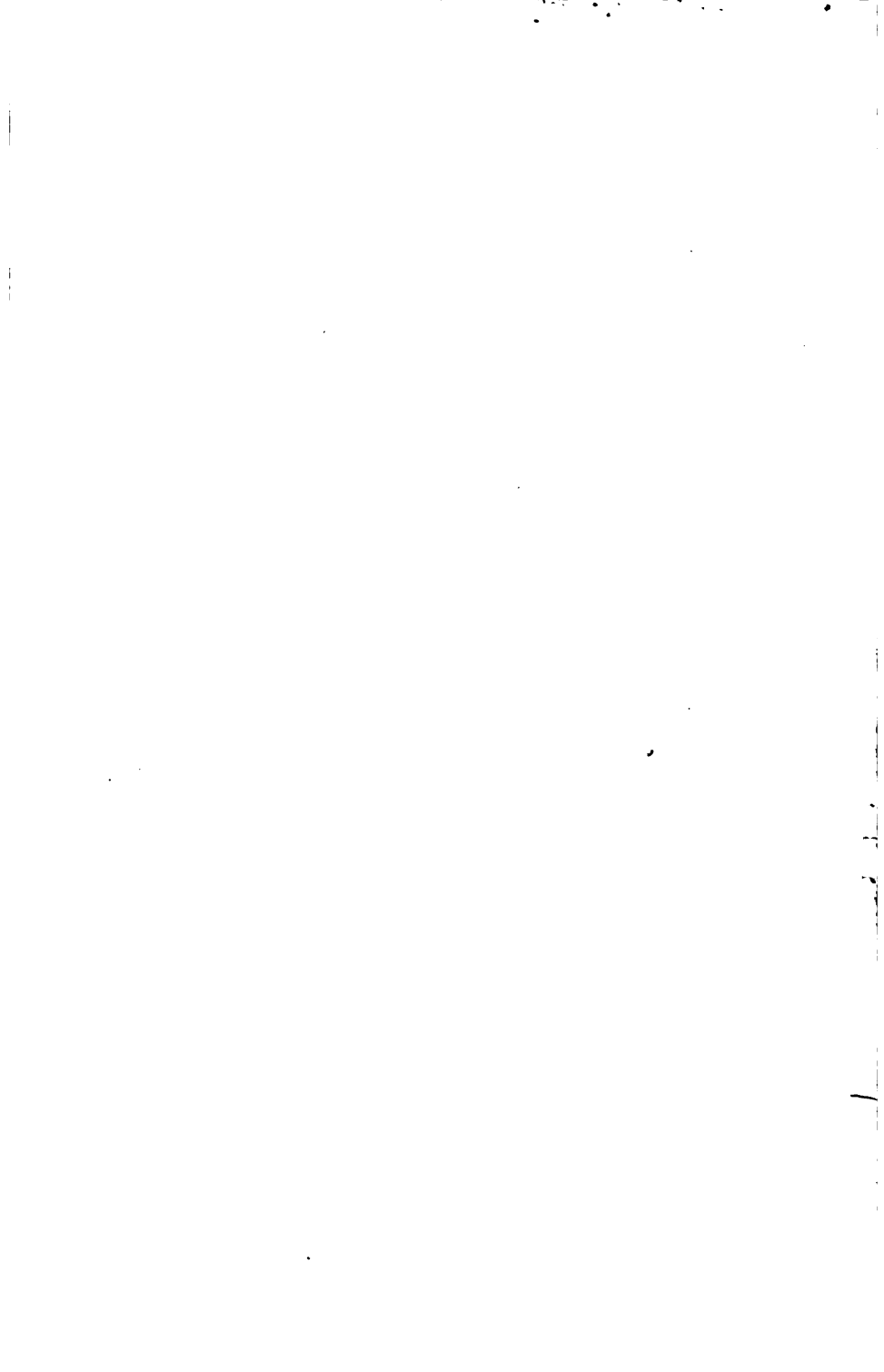
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**FRANZ GRILLPARZER
AND THE
AUSTRIAN DRAMA**







GRILLPARZER IN OLD AGE

**FRANZ GRILLPARZER
AND THE
AUSTRIAN DRAMA**

**BY
GUSTAV POLLAK**



**NEW YORK
DODD, MEAD & COMPANY
1907**

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Published November, 1907

TO THE MEMORY OF MY PARENTS
WHO SLEEP IN AUSTRIAN SOIL



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PREFACE

THE present volume owes its inception to two lectures on "Austrian Dramatists" delivered by the writer at the Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, in April, 1905. He has had reason to think that the subject might prove interesting to a more general audience, hence the lecture on Grillparzer has been expanded into the dimensions of a book, half biography, half translation, which he hopes may serve as an introduction to the study of the poet's works. How well Grillparzer deserves and repays close study, it has been the endeavor of the writer to show. He claims for his volume no higher merit than that of being, strange to say, the first attempt to acquaint American and English readers with the dramatist and the man. The translations are, as far as he is aware, the first English renderings, "Sappho" alone excepted, of any of the beauties of the original. The measure of space assigned to the various extracts from Grillparzer's plays is not intended to convey the writer's estimate of their respective merits. It has, however, seemed to him proper to select at least one of the plays for somewhat extended treatment. The play thus chosen, "König Ottokar's Glück und Ende," one of the most characteristic of the so-called Hapsburg dramas of the author, will, it is hoped, afford the reader a more accurate insight into Grillparzer's dramatic methods than would have been possible by more uniform quotations from each play.

In accordance with the plan of the book, Grillparzer has been largely allowed to speak for himself, both in poetry and prose. The story of his life, as far as he has told it, possesses an interest which neither summary nor comment could claim, and his own hand depicts as could no other some of the social and political conditions of a bygone age.

The writer has availed himself of the works of such authoritative German biographers and critics of the poet as Prof. August Sauer, the editor of Grillparzer's collected works, Prof. Emil Reich ("Grillparzers Dramen"), Prof. Johannes Volkelt ("Franz Grillparzer als Dichter des Tragischen"), Adalbert Fäulhammer ("Franz Grillparzer: Eine biographische Studie"), Heinrich Laube ("Franz Grillparzers Lebensgeschichte"), Wilhelm Scherer ("Franz Grillparzer: Beiträge zu seinem Verständnisse"), O. E. Lessing ("Grillparzer und das neue Drama"), as well as of Prof. Auguste Ehrhard's admirable French biography: "Le Théâtre en Autriche: Franz Grillparzer."

It is the writer's hope that his volume may make clear to an English-speaking audience not only the potency of Grillparzer's own genius, but also the peculiar fascination inherent in the work of two other authors who have shed lustre on their Austrian fatherland. Indeed, not a few of the countrymen of Mozart and Schubert whose writings have won fame throughout German-speaking countries charm because of their distinctive national flavor. German in speech and training, they are yet Austrian to the core. One writer of this kind, the poet and novelist Rosegger, has captivated the whole world.

"Among German authors now living," says a recent reviewer in the *New York Nation*, "there is no man who, for simple, wholesome humanity, can compare with the Austrian, whose name is not only a household word in the humblest homes of his native Steiermark, but whose works are read throughout the world." The qualities which Rosegger possesses in so eminent a degree, the simplicity, strength, humor and wisdom of his artless art, are characteristic of other writers of kindred power sprung from the same soil.

Among such writers—true poets whether in prose or verse—two dramatists in particular, unknown to the English-speaking world, have touched the German heart with all the magic power of genius—the one, Ferdinand Raimund, contemporaneous with Grillparzer, a writer of fairy plays; the other, Ludwig Anzengruber, Grillparzer's immediate successor, a creator of peasant dramas. A brief survey of what these men were and what they wrote will not be deemed out of place in a description of the most striking general characteristics of the Austrian drama. We shall more fully appreciate the peculiar significance of Franz Grillparzer after glancing at the work of the two dramatists who, within their modest spheres, reveal as clearly as he the native genius of Austrian poetry.



FRANZ GRILLPARZER AND THE AUSTRIAN DRAMA

I

THE VIENNA STAGE IN THE DAYS OF METTERNICH

FERDINAND RAIMUND

THE literary historians of Germany have always drawn a sharp theoretical distinction between "classic" writers and mere "Volksdichter." What is a "Volksdichter"? The very word baffles the translator. Literally, it means a "poet of the people," or a "natural" poet, as we sometimes say in English. But if the classic poet be not, first of all, a "natural" or heaven-born one, he is not a poet in any sense. Burns was a "natural" poet, if ever there was one, yet he has become an English classic of the purest water—nay, one of the master spirits of Goethe's "world literature," a realm whose every citizen is a king. Béranger, whose songs have rejoiced generations of French peasants unable to read a line of them, is one of the glories of French literature, though only a Volksdichter in the German sense of the word. Tasso's melodious stanzas are still re-echoed by Venetian gondoliers, in spite of his unquestioned classicalness. Andersen's blending of the ideal and real in his Fairy Stories, his inimitable humor and moving pathos, have made him at once the Volksdichter of his country and

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one of the world's classics. The Hungarians sing Petöfi's songs, glowing with national and human passions, and adore him; whether as Volksdichter or as classic they do not stop to consider. And in very truth, the Germans themselves refuse to be guided by the arbitrary distinctions of their literary critics, and have made of the *Lieder* and ballads of their greatest poets — of Goethe, Schiller, Uhland and Heine — people's songs in the truest sense, while conferring upon more than one unpretending Volksdichter an immortality withheld from many a classic of a bygone generation. Even the German encyclopædias admit that some Austrian Volksdichter may have more than local significance. Brockhaus says of Ferdinand Raimund: "He succeeds in depicting the most touching as well as the gayest scenes. His fancy grasps what is dramatically effective at the same time that his eye penetrates the depths of the human heart. He is, within the sphere of the Volksdichter, a genuine poet of rich and varied art." And the writer in Meyer's "Konversations-Lexikon" acknowledges the "weight and power" (Wucht des Inhaltes) of Anzengruber's dramas, in which we find "the extreme limit of passion, called forth, for the most part, by moral and religious conflicts."

Ferdinand Raimund was born in Vienna in 1790 and died near there in 1836. He received very little education, and was apprenticed to a confectioner, but took to the stage. After unsuccessful attempts in tragic rôles, he became, in spite of a natural leaning toward melancholy, a comedian of extraordinary versatility. His fame is mostly identified with the Vienna Leopoldstädter Theater, which, in the early decades of the last century, enjoyed an uncontested

supremacy among the minor theatres of Germany. In the opinion of the literary historian, Prof. Karl Goedeke, of Göttingen, it was the best popular stage Germany ever possessed. The fame of the theatre was greatest during that period in the history of Vienna and Austria which came to a close in March, 1848 — the era of Francis and his successor, Ferdinand, when Prince Metternich's deadening absolutism lay heavily upon the land. The far-famed Vienna "Gemüthlichkeit," vainly seeking an outlet for serious political thought and patriotic endeavor, found refuge in the distractions of the stage. There, at least, veiled allusions to existing conditions might be smuggled, undetected by the censor's eye, into harmless farces, blood-curdling plays of mediæval slaughter and avenging ghosts, or fantastic fairy dramas of the flimsiest construction. "Vienna," in the language of Goedeke, "was then the home of innocent pleasantry and banter, but it had no place for biting sarcasm or brilliant irony and satire. There were present all the elements for light comedies suited to the comprehension of all, and these simple wants were easily supplied. There was no demand for skilful intrigue, for a well-rounded plot carefully executed in accordance with dramatic art; sufficient if a few scenes of Vienna life were represented, or if some occurrences in the wide world beyond were brought into contrast with things Viennese. And all was well if the play enforced the moral that, while the outside world might be ever so beautiful and enjoyable, Vienna was after all still more so, and that in any case there was no place like it under heaven."

Raimund, who excelled as an actor in comic plays of

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this sort, was, in 1823, led by accident to try his hand at dramatic composition. Herr Meisl, a popular playwright of the conventional order, had been engaged upon a play with the queer title of "Der Barometermacher auf der Zauberinsel" (The Barometer-maker on the Enchanted Island), but could not get beyond the first act. Raimund offered to finish the play, and did so, to the utmost satisfaction of the easily pleased public. No one, least of all the author himself, imagined that the Vienna stage and German literature had found in him a true dramatic genius. There was, indeed, little enough in the amusing "Barometer-maker" to foretell the future fame of its author. It is not worth while to analyze the plot, but its humorous dialogue and merry couplets—one of which reminds Goedeke of some lines in Shakespeare's "Tempest"—make up for the barrenness of the story. Whatever the promise of Raimund's first play, it led in steady progression to three dramatic masterpieces—"Das Mädchen aus der Feenwelt, oder der Bauer als Millionär" (The Maiden from the Fairy World, or the Peasant as Millionaire), "Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind" (The Mountain King and the Misanthrope) and "Der Verschwender" (The Spendthrift).

In attempting to define to English readers the charm of these dramas, it may be of some service to point out a certain outward resemblance between the plays of Raimund and the most famous creation of a modern dramatist of widely different genius—Hauptmann's "Versunkene Glocke" (The Sunken Bell). We have in both Raimund and Hauptmann a curious blending of realism and romanticism, of actual life and dreamland, and

in both the lyric note is the most convincing, but the resemblance refers mainly to the effect upon the spectator; between their literary methods there is as wide a gulf as there is between the Vienna of Raimund's time and the Berlin of Hauptmann's. The fairy beings of Hauptmann's fantastic fairy drama stand for a deep symbolism; Raimund's allegorical fairies and mountain spirits typify the play of the primary emotions of the human heart, its struggles with familiar failings, the lessons of adversity and the ravages of age. His genial elves laugh and weep with the workaday heroes and heroines of the plays; their talk alternates pleasantly between High-German and local dialect, and abounds in jokes and puns and allusions to things which only the pure-blooded Viennese can fully relish. It is all so gay and innocent and simple that we often wonder where the charm and the poetry lie, until we leave the theatre or rise from the reading moved as only the inexplicable charm of true poetry can move us.

Raimund's first play was followed by "Der Diamant des Geisterkönigs" (The Diamond of the King of Celestial Spirits). In this play, which is founded on one of the stories of the "Arabian Nights," the farcical and burlesque elements still predominate, but as if to test the capacity of the public for better things, supernatural types are slyly introduced, endowed here and there with that poetic fancy which so captivates us in Raimund's later plays. In the king of the spirits himself, in his selfishly stupid, easy-going, superficially benevolent tyranny over his half-submissive, half-critical subjects, it is not difficult to discover allusions to the reign of the

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Emperor Francis. There is gentle satire on his patriarchal omnipotence in his scolding of the Four Seasons—brought into the play with telling effect—for their failure to live up to their promises, and for encroaching on one another's domain.

The success of "Der Diamant des Geisterkönigs" made it evident that its allegorical byplay was as much appreciated by the audiences of the Leopoldstädter Theater as were its broadly farcical situations, the sprightliness of the dialogue, and the gay songs and duets.

In his next play, "The Maiden from the Fairy World, or the Peasant as Millionaire," Raimund's muse ventured on a higher flight, and indeed each succeeding play contains less of the farcical element. It is truly pathetic to hear the author speak to a friend of "all the little stupidities which I introduced merely because I was afraid the public would take me too seriously." The central idea of the plot of the "Peasant as Millionaire" may be found in many another comedy. Shakespeare and Holberg, among others, have dramatized the vulgar upstart wallowing in undreamed-of luxury, only to find himself at last reduced to his original poverty; but Raimund has invested the figure with a charm of its own. Again we have the allegorical personification of human attributes—Contentment, Envy, Hatred, etc. Youth appears and makes way for Old Age. No Viennese, we may say no German, who has ever heard (as who has not?) the song with which Youth takes leave of Wurzel, the peasant millionaire, can forget its haunting melody. Even in Heine's ears rang unforgettable those simple words:

“Brüderlein fein, Brüderlein fein,
Zärtlich muss geschieden sein!
Scheint die Sonne noch so schön,
Einmal muss sie untergeh’n.
Brüderlein fein, Brüderlein fein,
Schlag’ zum Abschied ein!”

(Brotherkin dear, Brotherkin dear,
Sadly draws our parting near;
Let the sun shine e’er so bright,
Soon it sinks into the night.
Brotherkin dear, Brotherkin dear,
Now the parting hour is here.)

The amusing dialogue between Wurzel and Old Age bears in some respects a striking resemblance to Franklin’s Conversation with the Gout. Raimund, with that knowledge of stage effect which is the heritage of every actor turned playwright, puts vividly before our eyes the transition from the simple peasant to the pampered millionaire, to the feeble invalid, and, finally, to the hundred-year-old ashman with his ash-box and iron crook. There is infinite pathos in his call:

“Ashes!”

“O Lord, what a miserable wreck I am—‘Ashes’! What have I been and what am I?—‘Ashes’!”

Raimund’s awakening consciousness of his powers led him into the mistake of attempting several dramas written, in part, in the grand style of the classic school. His “Gefesselte Fantasie” (Fantasy Fettered) and one or two other serio-comic plays were failures. Fortunately, he allowed his native bent full play in “Der Alpenkönig und der Menschenfeind” (The Mountain King

and the Misanthrope). The play was possibly suggested by Grillparzer's conceit: "Imagine some one gifted with the power of changing into any person he pleases and bestowing on him his own personality." Raimund's Misanthrope Rappelkopf, the counterpart of Shakespeare's Timon, is cured of his hatred of man by the interposition of a kindly mountain spirit, who personates his double, and thus confronts him with his own image. The play, in spite of certain obvious weaknesses of construction, may challenge comparison with Molière's "Misanthrope," as well as with Schiller's dramatic fragment "Der Menschenfeind." There is in Raimund's Rappelkopf none of the "*sæva indignatio* of a noble nature soured" which distinguishes Alceste. Nor does the language of the play ever rise to the philosophic height of Molière's sparkling verses or the rhetorical polish of Schiller's diction; but there is an irresistible elemental power in the development of Rappelkopf's character. The transformed peasant tolerates no will but his own. He doubts the fidelity of his wife, sees in his servant an assassin, crosses his daughter's love affair and finally flees to the woods, recalling Alceste's:

"Et parfois il me prend des mouvements soudains,
De fuir dans un désert l'approche des humains."

Rappelkopf, however, takes with him his "deeply hated money, the lewd mistress of the world," again reminding us, in his imprecation, of Timon. He enters the miserable hut of a charcoal burner, whose inmates present, in the language of Prof. Erich Schmidt, "a picture of squalor in low life equalled in effectiveness only by the masterpieces



FERDINAND RAIMUND

of Dutch genre-painting. The children cry for bread; the daughters sing a popular love song; the father lies drunk on his miserable straw couch and babbles incoherently, mocked at by his impudent boys; the mother vainly tries to restore order; the grandmother sneezes; the dog barks; the cat mews." Finally the disorder is quelled by the clinking of Rappelkopf's gold. He buys the hut and its beggarly contents, on condition that its inmates depart at once. The sordid crew take their leave, singing that famous farewell song the sentimental tenor of which ill accords with the wild confusion of the preceding scene:

"So leb' denn wohl, du stilles Haus,
Wir zieh'n betrübt aus dir hinaus."

(Thou quiet home, we now must part,
We take our leave with saddened heart.)

There are probably few more effective scenes on the stage than the one in which Rappelkopf, face to face with his double, struggles against that accursed tenderness to which his nature is so unaccustomed. How he changes from approval of his own arbitrary actions to doubt, then to disapproval, and, finally, to disgust at the demeanor of his double; how he at last vehemently takes part against himself—all this, though brought out in simple language, is the work of one to whom the human heart has laid bare its secrets.

Raimund's last play, "Der Verschwender" (The Spend-thrift), appeared in 1834. It is the most poetic and dramatically the most perfect of all his works, and holds the German stage to this day with undiminished power. An atmosphere of sadness pervades this drama, in spite

of the delicious humor which here, as in so many of the world's masterpieces, smiles through tears. Again, as in the preceding play, we have in the central figure, the spendthrift Flottwell, a weak character, who is made to see in a wretched beggar the personification of his future doom. The fairy Cheristane, who had loved Flottwell, entrusts one of her spirits, Azur, with the task of rescuing, in the guise of a beggar, from the inevitable wreck of Flottwell's fortune whatever alms the spendthrift may voluntarily give him. Again and again the beggar-spirit crosses Flottwell's path, imploring him for a gift. Reduced to beggary himself, Flottwell in his fiftieth year confronts for the last time the beggar, who hands him back his own. "What you gave to the poor, you gave in the fullest sense of the word to yourself." With this sum Flottwell begins a new life, and rewards the kindness of his former servant Valentin, Raimund's most perfect creation. Valentin, who in the days of Flottwell's greatest prosperity had been employed in his castle, fell a victim to the treacherous intrigues of Wolf, Flottwell's body servant, and was ignominiously dismissed from the castle, together with his sweetheart, Rosa, now his wife. No translation could preserve the delicate shades of the scene in which Valentin, now a master-joiner in modest circumstances, meets his former master, a wretched beggar.

From this touching scene we are recalled to the reality of things by the practical sense of Valentin's excellent wife. She is by no means enchanted with the prospect of entertaining indefinitely an impecunious guest, as she tells Flottwell with perfect frankness, reminding him at the same time of the humiliation of her last departure

from his castle. Valentin, however, threatens to leave home with all their children if his former master is refused admission, and Rosa, after a delightfully realistic, good-natured domestic quarrel, yields with good grace. All ends in happiness, the greater because Flottwell divides Azur's gift with his hosts.

The writer cannot resist the temptation to quote, in however inadequate a translation, Valentin's famous "Hobellied" ("Song of the Joiner's Plane"), familiar to every German. The original is as follows:

"Da streiten sich die Leut' herum
Oft um den Wert des Glücks,
Der eine heisst den andern dumm,
Am End' weiss keiner nix.
Das ist der allerärmste Mann,
Der andre viel zu reich,
Das Schicksal setzt den Hobel an
Und hobelt s' beide gleich.

"Die Jugend will halt stets mit G'walt
In allem glücklich sein,
Doch wird man nur ein bisschen alt,
Da find't man sich schon d'rein.
Oft zankt mein Weib mit mir, o Graus!
Das bringt mich nicht in Wuth,
Da klopf ich meinen Hobel aus
Und denk', Du brummst mir gut.

"Zeigt sich der Tod einst mit Verlaub
Und zupft mich: Brüderl kumm,
Da stell' ich mich im Anfang taub,
Und schau' mich gar nicht um.
Doch sagt er: Lieber Valentin,
Mach keine Umständ', geh'!

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Da leg ich meinen Hobel hin,
Und sag der Welt Adje!"

(How often foolish folk dispute
About good luck. What stuff!
The poor man can't the rich refute,
For neither knows enough.
The poor man, he is much too poor,
The rich is much too rich.
But fate planes both so nicely o'er
You don't know which is which.

Youth wants to be at any cost
As happy as it can,
But when the bloom of youth is lost,
Why, then we change our plan.
My grumbling wife I try in vain
To please (I love her still)—
I beat the shavings from my plane,
And let her growl her fill.

When death at last polite draws near,
And says: "Thy hour has struck,"
I first pretend I cannot hear,
And try once more my luck.
But when he says: "'Tis all in vain,
My boy, such tricks to try,"
Why, then I put my plane away,
And bid the world good-bye.)

This brief sketch would be wholly inadequate without at least an allusion to Raimund's unique gift of drawing purely humorous characters, as exemplified in the scene in the "Verschwender" where Dumont, one of Flottwell's boon companions, a Frenchman, superficially enraptured with Nature in all her picturesque aspects, meets a poor,

old, toothless peasant woman, staggering under the weight of a bundle of wood. He admires her wrinkles and rags immensely, as they so admirably set off the beauty of the landscape, and she mistakes his enthusiasm for a sincere tribute to the remnants of her former beauty, and accepts the money he gives her with a delicious mixture of modesty and pride. The contrast between the broken High-German of the French *chevalier* and the old woman's homely dialect defies, of course, any attempt at translation.

As in Raimund's plays, so in his life humor often melted into pathos. In the bitter moods and the self-torture of *Rappelkopf* are reflected some of Raimund's own traits. His married life was unhappy; he imagined himself the victim of persecution and was suspicious of the motives of his warmest friends. He despised the "vulgarity of theatrical life," as he phrased it, and fled the city whenever he could, restlessly roaming over the mountains or seeking refuge in the stillness of his beloved rural retreat at Gutenstein, not far from Vienna. There he ended his life by a pistol shot in September, 1836. He had been bitten by a favorite dog and imagined himself doomed to die of hydrophobia.

Lovable as was Raimund's character in many ways, he remained, according to the testimony of all who knew him, a child in his uncontrollable emotional nature. But he also had the child's—or shall we say the true poet's?—naïve unconsciousness of his real genius, of its depth as well as its limitations. If he consumed himself in vain longing for an immortality other than that of the most poetic writer of German fairy dramas—an immortality as se-

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cure as that of the kindred spirits of Burns and Andersen—he was not without a proud recognition of the value of his work as the regenerator of popular dramatic taste. And when that taste underwent a change, and the cynical satirist, Johann Nestroy, appeared upon the scene, and the public applauded his sardonic wit and frivolous burlesques as it had applauded his own dreamlike allegories, the gentle Raimund succumbed to the cruel disillusionment. “It is all over with me and my plays. It was all in vain,” he exclaimed, after seeing one of Nestroy’s plays. The melancholy which deepened into suicide was really, as many of his friends believed, the bitter grief of a heart-broken genius, recognizing at the same time his own power and the futility of his life-work.

II

THE PEASANT DRAMA IN AUSTRIA

LUDWIG ANZENGRUBER

THE patriotic German-speaking Liberals of Austria have summed up their political aspirations in one word—"Josephinismus." The Emperor Joseph II. has ever been cherished by those Austrians whose political aspirations centre in German thought and culture as their ideal monarch. Simple in his ways, tolerant toward all creeds, yet jealous of the rights of the state as against the aggressions of the clergy, a "lover of mankind" (as he inscribed himself in donating a park to the people of Vienna), his human frailties and political shortsightedness have long been forgiven and forgotten by those who have invoked his memory whenever, as has so often happened in the history of Austria, religious intolerance had to be combatted or the predominance of the German element seemed threatened by the rising tide of Slavic and feudal self-assertion.

The violence of race and religious contests, which in recent years has found such disgraceful expression in the Vienna Reichsrath, is, it is true, a new phenomenon in parliamentary history; but those whose memory goes back to the early days of Austrian constitutionalism, forced upon the government by the disastrous war of 1866, will recall the intense bitterness of feeling then

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aroused by the struggle between liberalism and clericalism. The regulation of religious and school affairs occupied all Cisleithania, and Vienna was merely the centre of an agitation which spread to the remotest hamlet of every province. Shortly before the abolition, in 1868, of the supremacy of the ecclesiastical courts, which until then regulated all marriage relations, and the transfer of the entire department of education to the state, the clerical agitation, especially among the humbler rural representatives of the Church, reached its greatest height; for the very existence of the Concordat of 1855 was at stake. And when the Liberal party finally gained its crowning victory in the abrogation of the compact with Rome, Vienna and all Austria rang with theological and philosophical discussions called forth by the official sanction of free thought and free speech.

It was in the heated atmosphere of the elections of 1870 that there was performed, on the 5th of November, at the Theater an der Wien, in Vienna, a "play for the people" (Volksstück) in four acts, entitled "Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld" (The Priest of Kirchfeld). The author, who styled himself "L. Gruber," was entirely unknown to the public. He placed before the audiences of a theatre so long given over to the gay operettas of Offenbach a play dealing with the political and social questions which were then agitating all minds. The experiment resulted in an unparalleled triumph. The priest of Ludwig Anzengruber's play—such was the real name of the young author—appealed to liberal Austria almost with the power of divine revelation.

The hero is a village priest whose gospel is love for all .

mankind, regardless of religious and class distinctions. He is intolerant only toward intolerance, uncompromising only in judging his own weaknesses. He succumbs in his conflict with ecclesiastical bigotry, but he triumphs in the struggle against the most powerful of human passions. The young priest has won the affection of all the villagers. His influence turns the men from the village bar-room which they used to frequent in working hours, and puts a stop to the rude and often bloody encounters which terminated their festivities. But he has incurred the enmity of the feudal lord of the diocese. Faithful son of the Church as the priest is, he approves, heart and soul, of the liberal laws of the state. He does not permit his parishioners to join in public protests against the law, and while he cannot himself perform the marriage ceremony at the union between a young Catholic peasant and a Protestant maiden, he blesses the bride on her way to the civil office where the couple are to be united. But there is one man among the villagers who hates the good priest. Twenty years previously young Gerbersepp (Tanner Joe) wanted to marry a Lutheran girl, but the old priest denounced the ungodly affection, and so worked upon Gerbersepp's mother that for her sake he gave up his love. But with his sweetheart he forever lost his happiness and his hold on the world. He is an aimless vagabond, no longer Tanner Joe, but Wurzelsepp, the Rootdigger. His hatred of the Church and its priests is all the greater because his mother's mind has given way under the stress of his own misery. He hates the very sight of a priestly garb, and is intent on showing the villagers of Kirchfeld that their young priest is no better than all the rest of

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those who profess holiness. And when Anna, a buxom young girl, asks him to show her the way to the vicarage, where she is to serve, he sees with the prescient eye of malevolence that her entrance into the house bodes evil to the priest, and he gloats over the prospect of his fall. The girl, pure of heart as she is lovely in appearance, brings new sunshine into the curate's lonely life. Her innocent gayety recalls to him his lost sister, and he indulges a thoughtless dream that Anna may forever live in the vicarage. He presents her with a little golden cross, the legacy of his mother. Unsuspecting of evil thought in others, as he is unconscious of evil intent in himself, he permits her to wear the cross in public, as do so many girls in and around Kirchfeld. In a moon-lit night Wurzelsepp, who prowls around the vicarage, overhears an innocent talk between the priest and Anna, and he suddenly confronts him and discloses to him the secret of his budding affection for the girl.

"The voice of that young girl is to your ear as the song of a bird in the woods. You look up from your books and feast on her lovely face. You have given her your dead mother's cross, and although the girl can't be yours, you don't want her to be another man's wife. . . . With that gown on you, you must be what I think you are, even against your will. You *must*, even though your heart should break."

And the peasants, he says, will think as he does when they see her with the golden cross around her neck, for

"they are all good Christians; you priests have taught them to fear Satan more than God, and therefore they think evil rather than good of others. . . . You may struggle as much as you please, but that girl will be your ruin. I know you are thinking

of a thousand ways of keeping her with you, but I tell you there are only two: Either you keep her in dishonor, and then you are forever lost to Kirchfeld, or you let her go with a broken heart, and then Kirchfeld and the whole world are lost to you. There is no other way. I have you in my grasp so tight that I don't even need to lay hands on you."

And thus he leaves him. When Wurzelsepp meets the priest for the second time face to face, after the rumors he has helped to spread have worked their poison in the minds of the people, it is to implore the man he hates to give to his mother, who has drowned herself, a Christian burial. And when the priest soothes his sorrow and opens his arms to him, and only asks him to think henceforth better of his fellow-men, Sepp throws himself at his feet and exclaims: "Do with me as you think best, you, who are just and good." Not thus think the consistory and Count Finsterberg, the lord of the diocese. The priest is deprived of his office, excommunicated, and dismissed from the Church, which summons him to do penance for his sins. His last official act is the performance of the ceremony at the marriage of Anna and the young peasant whom she loves. His last words to the young couple and Wurzelsepp are:

"My children, although they have told you I am no longer a priest, I cannot help taking leave of you as such. I do not assume *their* rights in doing so, for the words I now utter with all my heart *they* have long since unlearned: 'I bless you.'"

The extraordinary success of "Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld" was due as much to its intrinsic dramatic merits as to its appearance at the psychological moment. Who was the author, the humor and pathos of whose peasants, life-

like in every fibre, appealed to the mere theatre-goer with as much force as did the noble sentiments of the priest, Josephiner to the core, to the liberal thought of the day?

Ludwig Anzengruber was born in Vienna on the 29th of November, 1839. His father, a petty official of liberal ideas and a writer of academically correct verses and insignificant plays, died at the age of thirty-four, and left to his widow and their only child a government pension of about seventy dollars, besides a large pile of manuscript. The boy browsed at will among his father's books. Shakespeare, Schiller, Lessing, Schlegel, and translations of Aristotle's "Poetics" and of Swift's "Gulliver," fed his imagination. His liking for the pagan Lucian involved him early in an amusing discussion with the priest who imparted religious instruction in the *Realschule*. His mother's straitened circumstances made it necessary for him to leave school. He entered the business of a bookseller and spent there three years, improving the opportunity to read books on art. He had some skill in drawing, at one time tried his hand at etching, and hoped to become a painter. Finally, however, he yielded to an irresistible fondness for the stage and joined a theatrical company at Wiener-Neustadt, near Vienna. His mother, a most admirable woman, accompanied him thither, and in all the subsequent wanderings of his roving actor-life. His early lyric productions show the fervent patriotism of the Liberal German-Austrian, as well as the bent of his mind toward that pantheism with which he later endowed some of his peasant-philosophers; but his poems, on the whole, lack individuality and distinction. He learned to know all the disillusionment of the typical strolling actor.

In Styria, Southern Hungary, in Croatia and Slavonia, he played, sometimes in inns or in a barn, whatever rôle fell to his lot. He acted nothing well, as he himself recognized; but he was everywhere respected by his colleagues for the ideal purity of his life and his touching devotion to his mother.

In 1866 he drifted back to Vienna, and was engaged as "understudy" in small rôles at the Harmonie Theater. He wrote some plays whenever the occasion called for them, was ready to furnish over night a one-act comedy, to suit some costumes that had just arrived from Paris, and thought himself not ill-rewarded by a royalty of a dollar or so.

Karl Millöcker, the composer, who afterwards acquired fame by his "Beggar Student" and other operettas, was Kapellmeister at the same theatre, and Anzengruber furnished the librettos for his first two musical attempts. With the collapse of the Harmonie Theater, Anzengruber was once more penniless, and he and his mother were reduced to the necessity of pawning what few valuables they possessed. Now and then he was lucky enough to sell a couplet to some *Volkssänger*, for the audiences of a beer garden, or to have some squib accepted by a comic weekly. Finally, a daily paper printed several of his stories, and in 1870 he found an engagement, at a salary of twenty dollars a month, in the bureau of the Vienna police department. He now determined to cling faithfully to his new profession, burned nearly all his youthful productions and a dozen plays, but decided to make one more attempt as a writer for the stage. The result was "Der Pfarrer von Kirchfeld."

Not quite twenty years were allotted to Anzengruber after the triumphant beginning of his literary career. He crowded into this period more than twenty plays and dozens of novels and tales. In order to appreciate his work at its true value, it is necessary to bear in mind that he was not so much the creator as the regenerator of peasant life in German literature. When he began to write, Auerbach's "Village Tales" had largely lost their hold on the public. A reaction against his idealized peasants had set in as exaggerated and uncritical as is much of the criticism levelled in our country at Cooper's idealized Indians. Anzengruber's realism captivated the world as Auerbach's idealism had captivated it thirty years before, and yet a saner critical opinion has not found it necessary to disparage the earlier writer in order to appreciate the later. Auerbach himself welcomed the advent of his powerful successor as warmly as Anzengruber acknowledged the essential genuineness of the characters of the "Schwarzwälder Dorfgeschichten." Both depicted life as they saw it, but if Auerbach's types remind us of Knaus and Defregger, Anzengruber's recall Millet. Shadows predominate in the greatest dramas of the Austrian, as does sunshine in the poet of the Black Forest; and yet no one who has seen or read one of Anzengruber's masterpieces can deny that he caught the poetry of peasant life as fully as he grasped its realism, and that his sense of humor was as keen as his pathos was deep. A mere allusion to the plots of one or two of his plays will indicate the extraordinary range of his dramatic characters. "Der Meineidbauer" (The Perjured Countryman) shows us a peasant, respected as the wealthiest and most God-fearing

man far and near, who had destroyed the will of his brother, which deeded his property to his illegitimate children. The Meineidbauer had sworn that there was no will, and had thus become sole heir. The story is developed with great power, free from melodramatic taint and direct moralizing, the peasant nature, whether in defiant sin or in the agony of remorse, being true to itself, and pleasing incidents of every-day village life shedding a ray of sunshine over the gloom of the plot.

"Die Kreuzelschreiber" (The Cross Signers), one of Anzengruber's most successful comedies, was based on an actual incident in a Bavarian community. The peasants there were induced by a village radical to sign their cross (as they were unable to write) to an address to Dr. Döllinger, the famous leader of the Old Catholics, shortly after his excommunication by the Church. The outraged village priests and father-confessors in the play work upon the feelings of the women to such an extent as to cause them to forswear their marital duty to their husbands if they persist in their godless course. Nature triumphs and peace is restored. The subject suggests one of the comedies of Aristophanes. "Die Kreuzelschreiber" contains one of Anzengruber's most delightful characters, Steinklopferhanns (Stonecrusher John). "My world is a jolly world," is the sum and substance of his philosophy. "I know it's a jolly one, even if you fellows don't," for he had a revelation when he was twenty years old, and had come home from the army because he had been kicked by a horse, and thought he had to die. "If I must die," he reasoned, "let me die in the open air, with the green meadow as my cover, and the sun to close my eyes." And

so he dragged himself out and threw himself into the grass, and there he fell asleep.

"And when I awoke, the sun was near setting, and a few stars hung up there so near to me that it seemed as if I could reach them. Far in the valley smoked the chimneys, and the village forge near the edge of the woods twinkled like a glow-worm. Around me the bugs and grasshoppers were fussing and buzzing, so that I came near laughing, and above me in the branches the birds hopped, and a fine soft breeze was blowing. I look around and suddenly I find I can get up without a hitch, and as I stretch and see the world—how full of life and joy it is, and how the sun goes down and the stars come up—I feel as if I had just been made all over, and as if the bright sunshine had all gone into me, and then I seem to hear some one say, just as though we two were talking to each other: 'Nothing can happen to you. Nothing counts when it's all over: whether you lie six feet deep under the sod, or whether you see thousands of others lie there before your turn comes—nothing can happen to you! You belong to them all, and they belong to you. Nothing can happen to you.' And then I was so full of joy that I shouted to everything around me: 'Nothing can happen! Nothing!' That was the first time I ever was jolly, and jolly I have been ever since, and I only wish no one else were sad and spoiled my jolly world. Be jolly, Gelbhofbauer, be jolly, nothing can happen to you!"

Contrast with this village optimist the figure of old Brenninger, who, like all the other men in the play who have affixed their cross to the fatal document, is placed before the alternative of banishment from house and home or a penitential pilgrimage to the See of the Holy Father. "Sleep in the hayloft or go to Rome," is the order that has gone forth, and no one is so crushed by the decree as old Brenninger, who thus tells Steinklopferhanns his woe:

"You don't know what it all means to an old man, you boy.

You don't know what one feels when the old one comes out of her room in her Sunday best, and I put my hand on her like a young fool head over heels in love. She gets angry; well, she has shrunk a good deal and I haven't grown any prettier; you'd think we might almost get sick of each other if we hadn't lived together in the good old days—yes, we have had a good time together. Nearly fifty years I have lived with my Mary Ann, and if one has had so many children—let's see—seven of them (he counts them on his fingers)—there was Mirzl, and Rosie, and Sepp, and the first one—I can't remember its name. If one has brought up seven of them, in good times and in hard, and has seen them carried out, one after the other, to God's acre, then one gets sort of used to being lonely and living together with the old one."

"I have nothing to expect in this world any more," he says, as he turns to go to his hayloft. "I miss the old way, and if I can't have the old ways"—and next day old Brenninger is found dead in the creek. He had missed the path. The old ways were gone.

The world outside of Germany will never know Anzengruber, the dramatist, as he deserves to be known, for his characters speak for the most part a language, neither wholly dialect nor High German, which inevitably limits their audience and precludes faithful translation. Those of his plays which deal with the social problems of city life are decidedly inferior in merit. Not a few of his short stories, however, particularly those known as "Dorfgänge" (Village Rambles), are of universal interest, and one, at least, of his novels awaits the skilful translator who is to reveal to English readers an unsuspected mine of psychological analysis, poetic beauty, and dramatic interest. "Der Sternsteinhof" (Starstone Farm, so called from a meteorite which fell upon the field and was built

into the foundation wall of the house) is the story of a young girl, the poorest and most beautiful in the village, daughter of a worthless mother, and herself worldly and unprincipled, and consumed by the ambition to become mistress of the stately Sternsteinhof. She despises the son of its proud old peasant owner, but gives herself up to him under a promise of marriage. She weds a sculptor of saintly images, himself of saintly goodness, who adopts her child as his own; and when he dies, and the wife of her betrayer dies, she marries him, and thus she reaches the goal of her ambition. As ruler of the estate, she disarms, by the skill of her management, the former bitter hostility of her father-in-law, a character as strong as his son, her husband, is weak and contemptible. The young Bauer is killed in war, and the widow lords it over his father, now her willing subject. The Sternsteinhof expands and flourishes as it never did before. And the moral? There is none; but the story holds us with a power Turgenieff could not have surpassed, while its sombreness is relieved by the varied charm of its fascinating minor characters. The novel throbs with the very pulse of nature, in the terrifying aspects of human vice and passion, brought into the sharpest contrast with almost superhuman self-abnegation; while the descriptions of rural life recall some of the most brilliant pages of George Sand.

There is, perhaps, in all literature no realist at once so real and so ideal as Anzengruber. He shows us all of human life within the confines of a small village. "O good God," says an old woman in one of his stories, "how much is going on in your wide world!" "Yes," answers the old man, "right you are, everything happens that can



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happen." His peasant is always busy with his petty concerns, whatever his character and his fate. There are no "English Romans," to use Goethe's characterization of Shakespeare's rabble in "Julius Cæsar," in Anzengruber's plays. And as the human heart disclosed its secrets to him, so Nature made him her confidant. To harmonize man and Nature was part of his æsthetic and moral creed. "If the accursed religious quarrels of the Thirty Years' War," he wrote to a friend in the North, "had not poisoned our people down here, in the midst of all that is glorious under heaven, man and Nature would be in full accord. How beautiful it all might be! But Nature is still beautiful and man improves, little by little, after all."

The troubles that fell so bountifully to the lot of every one in Austria's great poets did not spare Anzengruber. Even after his fame was secure his income was barely adequate to his modest needs, and the fickle favor of the Vienna public produced in him moods of deep depression, healthy and fate-defying as his manly nature was.

"A restless spirit," he wrote at the close of 1875 to his intimate friend, the poet Rosegger, "drives me from place to place, from plan to plan. I wonder what the new year will bring forth to the state, the city and to my manager. . . . As for me, personally, I have neither fears nor hopes." The persecutions of the public censor wrung from him the bitter complaint: "As I can't touch my pen without seeing any play of mine, to its very title, objected to by the government, there is nothing left me but to write what is harmless and insipid. O what a state of affairs!"

One of the most warm-hearted of men (with all his brusqueness of manner) and an exemplary husband, as

he had been the most dutiful of sons, he was unfortunate in the choice of his wife, from whom he was divorced a few months before his death. Honors and comparative affluence came too late to be long enjoyed. The award of the Schiller prize, in 1878, was perhaps the triumph he most appreciated. The modest new home he had acquired in Vienna he was not to enter. Preparations had been made by a few of his most intimate friends for the celebration of his fiftieth birthday, when he was seized by an illness which soon proved fatal, on the 10th of December, 1889. He worked almost until the hour of death.

Anzengruber, like Raimund, drew his strength from the very soil of his country. The charm of Austrian and Viennese life communicated itself to the works of both as unmistakably as did the darker sides of Austrian conditions. Raimund, the untutored dreamer, and Anzengruber, the keen-eyed realist, were Austrian in every fibre of their being, and German literature must recognize this fact while welcoming them to the illustrious company of the great writers who were rooted in the greater German fatherland.

Goethe has clearly vindicated the right of artless poetry to speak a universal language. "True poetic genius," he says, "wherever we may meet it, is complete in itself, even if hampered by imperfection of language and lack of outward skill; for it possesses that higher inner form which in the end conquers everything and often produces more glorious effects in an obscure and imperfect medium than it does, later on, in the perfect." German Austria is rich

in writers the unstudied simplicity of whose language accords so well with their emotional depth, and she is equally rich in those who are classed with the acknowledged masters of German prose, for all their specifically Austrian flavor. We recognize this national characteristic and welcome it wherever it manifests itself—in Nikolaus Lenau, the melancholy singer of the Hungarian plain; in Adalbert Stifter, the idyllic word painter of lowland heath and highland forest; in Ernst von Feuchtersleben, the wise physician and author of the genially philosophic "Dietetics of the Soul"; in "Anastasius Grün" (Count Anton Auersperg), the noble bard of liberty; in Eduard von Bauernfeld, whose gay comedies depict the upper strata of Viennese life, as do Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach's refined and thoughtful novels all the various classes of Austrian society. All these writers are children of a common fatherland, which endowed them with graces of its own, and all are akin, in sincerity of feeling and delicacy of expression, to their great compatriot Franz Grillparzer, alone on his towering height.

III

FRANZ GRILLPARZER'S EARLY YEARS

FRANZ GRILLPARZER was born in Vienna on the 15th of January, 1791, and died there on the 21st of January, 1872. Fame came to him at the very beginning of his career, yet his long life, consistently devoted to high ideals, brought him disappointments such as have fallen to the lot of few writers of his intellect and character. Prof. August Sauer has prefaced his standard biography of the poet by a telling characterization of the attitude of the world toward him during his lifetime and since his death:

"Born in a land which from time immemorial has cultivated German poetry and song, but which in the march of centuries had become completely estranged from the progress of German thought; reared during a time of political stress, when the foundations of law and morality, of hereditary privileges and acquired rights were crumbling; meeting with many obstacles during the period of his youthful development, yet preserving his own individuality in spite of conflicting influences, the poet appeared before the public, at the age of twenty-six, with a work of rare maturity and power, and became at one bound the literary celebrity of his day, both in his native country and the greater German fatherland. But not for long did the favor of the fickle public remain true to him. The

theatres of Germany soon closed their doors to the Austrian, and even in his own country he found it difficult to make his way. Roughly handled by shallow and thoughtless critics; forced to defend his intellectual treasures against a stupidly insolent and tyrannical censorship; enduring the tortures of a melancholy temperament, he shrank from the world more and more, and finally lapsed into complete silence after his profoundest and most characteristic work had met with a bare *succès d'estime*, and a remarkable creation, revealing the humorous side of his genius, had been hooted down by the public of the very theatre which had witnessed his first triumph. And while, dejected and embittered, he gave himself up to his favorite studies—becoming, in his seclusion, a mere myth to his contemporaries—a theatre director of unusual energy and intelligence succeeded in winning back for the Vienna Burgtheater play after play from the literary legacy of the still living writer. The author witnessed the belated flowering of his fame with indifference, almost with disgust; but the homage paid him by his native city extended beyond its bounds, and the remarkable celebration of his eightieth birthday awakened all Germany from her apathetic attitude of so many years. A year later his funeral gave rise to a demonstration such as no German poet since Klopstock had evoked. The honors paid to his memory in Austria were such as had hitherto been reserved only for the most distinguished and popular of her military heroes, like Radetzky and Hess. The enthusiasm thus engendered affected most deeply the rising generation, and the year of his death marked the resurrection of his works.

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With a surprise akin to awe Germany beheld a half-forgotten poet rise from the shades of the past, her literary possessions being as it were suddenly enriched by the discovery of a national classic. Since then the personality of the poet has aroused growing interest, and the researches of posterity have disclosed the powers of a poet as gifted as he was unfortunate, whose life is thrown into relief by the background of a singular historical epoch now practically closed forever."

United Germany is beginning to atone for the indifference with which down to 1870 Berlin, and not Berlin alone among the great centres of thought, regarded the intellectual life of Vienna. More than any other of Austria's men of genius, has Grillparzer suffered from the wilful neglect of the literary historians of Germany. During a long period, not only critics of the stamp of Wolfgang Menzel—whose littleness has escaped oblivion only because he dared to attack the great—but writers like Gervinus and Julian Schmidt utterly failed to grasp the significance of the Austrian dramatist. Within recent years, however, there has grown up in Germany a Grillparzer literature inferior in volume and minuteness of critical research only to that which gathers steadily around the names of Goethe, Schiller, Lessing and Heine. Grillparzer's bitter remark to Beethoven: "Foreign literary men have a prejudice against anything that comes from Austria; in Germany there exists a veritable conspiracy against Austrian writers" fortunately finds no echo in the Germany of to-day. All German-speaking countries joined Austria in celebrating the centenary of Grillparzer's birth, in January, 1891, when fifty-five theatres,

from Bukowina to the Baltic Provinces, performed his plays.

International fairmindedness has always been slow in making its way into literature. Certainly no German has as yet written a history of German literature that does full justice to Austrian dramatists—a history such as an enlightened foreigner, like Taine, might have produced. Had the brilliant Frenchman chosen to place before the world a picture of what is best and most enduring in the German drama, we should, in all probability, possess a fairer estimate of the achievements of Grillparzer than has until recent times been obtainable from any German source. Whatever the defects of his method, Taine, who pleaded so eloquently for the hospitable interchange of ideas in the realm of literature, who in his "History of English Literature" welcomed the fact that "the French are beginning to comprehend the gravity of the Puritans," and who hoped that "perhaps the English will end by comprehending the gayety of Voltaire"—the French critic, in comparing Grillparzer with Goethe, Schiller and the very few other German dramatists with whose genius his may fitly be compared, would have made adequate allowance for those natural, political and social characteristics of the country of his birth that made the Austrian poet what he was. The Germans too long refused in his case to heed Goethe's injunction to go into the poet's land in order to understand the poet:

"Wer den Dichter will verstehen
Muss in Dichter's Lande gehen."

In an oft-quoted distich Grillparzer wrote: "If you look at the country around you from the heights of the Kahlen-

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berg you will understand what I have written and what I am," and but a short time before his death he said: "I am not a German, but an Austrian, of Lower Austria, and above all am I a Viennese." And indeed it is easy to recognize in him the virtues and defects of the typical Viennese, and to trace in his character and his writings the influence of his surroundings during that eventful period of Austrian history that lies between his birth and his death—a period which includes the wars against revolutionary France, Austria's humiliation by Bonaparte, the deadening régime of Metternich, the liberal spring-tide of 1848, the reactionary gloom of the following years, and the catastrophe of Sadowa, which led in 1867, five years before the poet's death, to the transformation of the Hapsburg monarchy into the constitutional dual empire of to-day.

Grillparzer's life nearly equalled in length that of Goethe, but it was as full of sad unrest as Goethe's was of serene repose. "Grillparzer," says his French biographer, Prof. Auguste Ehrhard, "never knew that quiet and smiling happiness which the Weimar poet owed to his good fortune, to the advantages of a genius always sure of itself, to the balance and harmony of his varied endowments, and also, as we must remember, to his indifference to the political destinies of his country. The Austrian poet lacked these essentials for the enjoyment of life. He experienced bitter disappointments, which all the splendor of his fame could not efface, and his patriotic heart suffered in every crisis through which his country passed."

Grillparzer has revealed his inner life in a remarkable autobiography, which he wrote in 1853, to conform with

a usage of the Vienna Academy of Sciences requiring its members to furnish a sketch of their lives. Unfortunately, his recollections close with the year 1836. There is, however, much valuable autobiographic material in fragmentary jottings and in diaries of his travels in Italy, in 1819; in Germany, in 1826; in France and England, in 1836, and in Greece, in 1843. His "Recollections of the Year 1848" complete the direct record of his life.

He was the son of a cultured lawyer of high character, but somewhat stern disposition, who reminds us in some of his traits of the old Councillor Goethe. The boy inherited from his father the clearness of intellect which was one of his most striking characteristics. The early education he received was desultory, and tended to the suppression of his romantic and artistic instincts. There was little intimacy between father and son. The mother, impressionable and affectionate as she was, entirely lacked the reposeful charm of "Frau Aja," who presided over young Goethe's home. She came of a musical family and was herself passionately fond of music. Haydn and Mozart had frequented the house of her father, Christopher Sonnleithner. He and his two sons were well known in the musical and theatrical circles of Vienna. Franz inherited his mother's musical talent, which afterward proved his chief solace, but, unfortunately, along with it, the tendency to melancholy which brooded over his whole life.

He was the oldest of four sons. He differed from his brothers so radically in character and tastes that he grew up, as he wrote, "in complete isolation." All his brothers proved a source of constant care to him. One of them

drowned himself at the age of seventeen, another became insane. The brothers passed the years of their childhood in a gloomy dwelling with enormous rooms, into which a ray of sunshine rarely penetrated.

Franz was an omnivorous reader from a very early age. A story of the martyrdom of the saints, which fell into his hands at a country place, awakened in him the desire to become a priest and rival their heroism in suffering. "When I returned to town," he relates, "I got myself a priestly robe made of yellow paper, and read mass, my oldest brother gladly acting as my assistant. I preached leaning over the back of a chair, our old cook, who listened very devoutly to my nonsense, being my only audience. She was also the only listener I had when I played on the piano, but she cared for one piece only, which she asked me to play again and again. At that time the execution of Louis XVI. was still fresh in everybody's mind. Among other exercises I played a march, which I was told had been performed at the execution, and in the second part of which there was a run of an octave, played with one finger, that was supposed to express the drop of the guillotine's knife. The old woman always wept copiously when I reached that passage, and could not hear it often enough."

The children received scarcely any religious instruction. "My father," he wrote, "had been reared in the period of Joseph II. and did not think much of religious exercises. My mother attended mass every Sunday; she was followed by a man-servant, who carried her prayer book; but we children never entered church. I remember that later on, at the gymnasium, where every schoolday began with mass,

I, in my savage ignorance, had to watch my comrades in order to know when to rise, to kneel, or to beat the breast."

Young Grillparzer shared Goethe's early and intense interest in the theatre. He and his brothers acted in romantic plays improvised by him, and manufactured their own knightly armor and the stage settings. He was inspired by a dramatic library which he found among his father's books, and which included "Hamlet" and "King Lear," but none of the plays of Schiller and Goethe. Lessing's "Nathan der Weise" he did not find to his liking. Among other books which fascinated him were translations of Cook's "Voyages," Buffon's "Natural History" and, above all, Guthrie and Gray's "Universal History," which he "devoured rather than read." The first German poets he became acquainted with were Gessner and Ewald Kleist. When at last a volume of Goethe fell into his hands, he was charmed with the hero of "Götz von Berlichingen," but did not (much care for the other characters. Nor did he fully appreciate Schiller's plays. He read "Wallenstein's Lager" eagerly, but the "Piccolomini" he found dull, because of the long speeches. He preferred a translation of Gozzi's "Raven" to all the dramas of Goethe, Schiller and Shakespeare. The boy became early aware that he was hampered in his dramatic recitations by a lisp, an inherited defect which he later overcame by imitating the example of Demosthenes.

Neither at the gymnasium nor at the university was Grillparzer remarkable for scholarship or application, but he soon became known among his fellow-students and to some of his professors for his literary gifts. His father discouraged the youthful author, although he took a cer-

tain pride in his talent. He generally wound up his criticism of his son's productions by predicting that he would die a pauper's death. "My father's displeasure," wrote Grillparzer, "reached its height at the time of the first occupation of Vienna by the French, after our disastrous campaign. My patriotic ardor, stimulated by my father's own attitude, prompted me to ridicule the absurd measures of the government in a wretched song. When I read it to him he turned pale with fright, represented to me that I ran the risk of imperilling my future by such verses, and implored me not to show them to any one, though he did not tell me to destroy them, which fact, as I thought, proved that he was not altogether displeased with them." In some unexplained way the poem had already fallen into strange hands, for the next day his father returned in dismay from the restaurant where he occasionally took a glass of beer in the evening, and told the boy that the poem had been read aloud by one of the guests and met with general approval. "The doggerel," wrote Grillparzer, "went the rounds of the city, in spite or rather because of its uncouth plainness of speech, but fortunately no one guessed the name of the author." The verses, entitled "Schlecht und Recht" (Wrong and Right), are included in Grillparzer's collected poems, and testify alike to his fervent patriotism and a skill in versification remarkable in a boy of fourteen.

Under the influence of Schiller's "Don Carlos," Grillparzer began, at the age of sixteen, a drama, "Blanka von Kastilien," which he finished two years later. It deals with the fate of the queen of Pedro the Cruel, and is chiefly interesting as foreshadowing certain psychological

problems which he introduced in later dramas. "Blanka" resembles "Don Carlos" in being far too long to be performed in one evening. Though not without dramatic promise, it is crude and prosy. Grillparzer's early power of self-analysis is shown in his own condemnation of the play, in 1808, as one that could never be acted. His mind was occupied with half-a-dozen ambitious dramatic schemes, but he finished only, in 1811, a little comedy, "Wer ist schuldig?" (Who is Guilty?), which reminds one of Körner's one-act plays.

Grillparzer, like Goethe, studied law to please his father, but like him, also, he derived the principal inspiration of his college years from contact with gifted fellow-students. Kant's philosophy was the subject of heated discussion at social gatherings in their rooms. One of his closest friends, Altmütter, who afterwards became professor of chemistry in the Vienna Institute of Technology, anticipated, according to Grillparzer, Sir Humphry Davy in a discovery concerning the nature of alkalies. "Altmütter and I," wrote Grillparzer in his autobiography, "were among the very laziest students, and really cared only for discussions. We loved to stroll among the beautiful surroundings of Vienna, indulging in the most extravagant plans for the future. Thus we stood one day upon the heights of the Kahlenberg, behind us the pedestal of some lost statue. We mounted the altar-like block with a feeling of almost godlike importance, and, embracing each other, looked out upon the vast panorama spread before us. Unnoticed by us, an elderly gentleman, evidently a North German, had climbed the height, and standing near us, regarded us with astonishment. 'Yes,' said Alt-

mütter to him, as we descended, 'do not wonder. This one—pointing to me—will raise a temple, and I shall tear one down.' As for the latter, he meant Lavoisier's system of chemistry. The gentleman probably thought he had two lunatics before him."

At the age of fifteen Grillparzer experienced the first pangs of love. The object of his devotion was an actress at one of the minor theatres, of the same age as himself. He had an exalted idea of both her person and her accomplishments, and when he learned that her character was not above reproach, and saw her at the theatre in a box, in the company of an old man, he was so greatly shocked that he became ill. He saw and heard around him at an early day much that was objectionable, but "an innate sense of shame," he wrote, "preserved me from following the bad example given me by my comrades. This—shall I call it sense of honor?—was so strong in me that it did not even permit me to cut my lessons at school. To the best of my knowledge, I have never missed a lecture." Another youthful love episode is worth recording.

"Several years afterwards," he relates, "I fell in love with a singer, who, as Cherubin in Mozart's 'Figaro,' in all the charm of her youthful beauty, and transfigured by the glorious music, took complete possession of my imagination. I wrote a poem to her which may be called good, although its passionate fervor bordered somewhat on the insane, or even on the immoral. However, it never entered my mind to approach her in person. I was at that time in the poorest circumstances, as was evidenced by my wardrobe, while the object of my passion was decked in silk and gold, the daily gifts of her numerous admirers.

Nor could I assume that the charms of my person might predispose her in my favor. I therefore locked up my verses with a keen feeling of my humbleness, and nothing in the world could have tempted me to speak of my sentiments to any one. Long after, I met a young and wealthy man, who had been during the period of my Cherubin frenzy one of the favored admirers of my heroine, that is to say, one of those who paid her tribute in solid coin. We talked of poetry, and he remarked how queer it was that poets whose first productions manifested decided talent so often disappeared from public view forever. Thus he remembered to have seen—he did not know in what way—at the time of his acquaintanceship with that singer, a poem professing the most ardent love for her in the most beautiful verses. The girl became almost frantic on reading them, and used every effort to find out who the author was, declaring that if she succeeded she would dismiss all her admirers, in order to grant to the unknown poet the favor he craved in such beautiful language. This declaration, he said, almost caused a rupture between them. At the present day, he went on to say, there was not a poet before the public able to write such verses. I asked him to show me the poem, and sure enough it was my own. In a manner unaccountable to me it had found its way to her, and while I was consumed with hopeless longing, the beautiful object of my desires awaited with impatience an opportunity of meeting me. But such has been my fate throughout life—want of confidence in myself whenever I was undecided how to act, alternating with haughty pride whenever I was disparaged or compared with some one else to my disadvantage.” The poem, under the title

"Cherubin," has a place in the collected works, and is indeed remarkable for its glowing passion, unreservedly, though not indelicately, expressed.

The growing ill-health of his father awoke the young student from his life of careless ease. In his melancholy mood he took up once more the study of music, which he had neglected for years. But he had forgotten all he ever knew, and nothing remained but the ability to improvise. "Often," he wrote, "I placed a copper engraving upon the music stand before me and played what the subject suggested, as though it were a musical composition. I remember that later on, while I was a tutor in the house of a noble family, the violin teacher of the young count, a musician of high standing, listened to me behind the door for a quarter of an hour at a time, and on entering the room could not praise me enough. The count's possessions included only an old piano without strings; nevertheless, I often played upon it for half a day, without intermission, and regardless of the absence of sound. Later on, when I devoted myself to poetry, the gift of musical improvisation gradually diminished, particularly after I took lessons in counterpoint, in order to systematize my thoughts. My progress and development become more satisfactory, but I lost inspiration, and now I know but little more than when my fondness for music first awoke. I had always this strange peculiarity, that in passing from one subject to another, I lost my fondness for the former, and with it whatever ability for it I possessed, and what skill in it I had acquired. I have cultivated whatever a man can do. Dancing, hunting, riding, fencing, drawing, swimming—there was nothing too difficult for me. Yes, I may say that,

with the exception of hunting, I cultivated everything with decided talent, and yet I have been weaned from all these things. Thus I was one of the best, or at least one of the most elegant, of swimmers, but if I were thrown into the water to-day, I should certainly drown. Inspiration has been my deity, and thus it will always be."

During his father's illness he set to music a number of songs, among them Goethe's "König von Thule," which the sufferer never tired of hearing. The father's decline was rapid. His illness was the result of his patriotic sorrow over the political misfortunes of Austria, which the son also keenly felt. The young man enrolled himself in the student corps which in 1809 was organized to defend the city against the French invaders. Grillparzer's father was financially ruined by the social disorganization following the military disasters, and the national downfall broke his heart. After he read the provisions of the humiliating peace of Pressburg, he was a changed man. "When, impelled by a presentiment of his approaching end, I sank on my knees at his bedside and, weeping, kissed his hand, he said: 'It is now too late,' doubtless wishing to convey to me that he was not fully satisfied with my character and my doings." "I never really loved my father," adds Grillparzer, "he was too forbidding in manner. Just as he most rigidly suppressed his own emotions, so he made it almost impossible for any one to approach him with any display of sentiment. Only later on, when I learned to appreciate the motives of some of his actions, and when I rejoiced in the reputation—which lives on to this day—of his almost incredible honesty, and was thereby inspired to emulate, however feebly, his own example, only then did

I pay to his memory the debt incurred during his lifetime."

The death of the father left the family almost absolutely without means. Two of the sons earned a living by giving music lessons, and Franz, who was then in his eighteenth year, and had still two years of law study before him, acted as tutor to two young noblemen, and was thus enabled to contribute to the support of his mother. He bethought himself of his tragedy "Blanka von Kastilien," and offered it to the secretary of the Burgtheater, Herr Sonnleithner, his mother's brother. The play was returned to him with the curt remark that it was unfit for performance, and the young author, remembering his father's prophecy, resolved to renounce forever all dreams of a literary career. Meantime, he had lost his pupils, but one of his former professors offered him a position as tutor in jurisprudence to the nephew of a wealthy count. The young man had another teacher for his general studies, and Grillparzer was only required to give him a few hours of special instruction daily.

"I got into a queer family," he writes in his autobiography. "The young count, of about my own age, who is still living, will not think ill of me if I say in this place that our studies, probably as much through my fault as through his own, amounted to very little. The old uncle was a veritable caricature, frightfully ignorant and arrogant, self-willed, stingy, and bigoted. Having formerly been ambassador at one of the more important German courts and imperial commissary at Ratisbon, he loved to talk of his missions. I have called him stingy, but he was not so in regard to two matters—his stable and the kitchen.

In the former he kept a number of magnificent steeds, which, from excessive care for them, he hardly ever used. Over the kitchen presided alternately two cooks of the first quality, a German and a Frenchman. I won the count's favor through my appetite, then highly developed. Every day, between eleven and twelve o'clock, he entered my room in his soiled dressing-gown, in order to read to me the menu and to lay out a sort of plan of campaign—how much was to be eaten of one dish and how little of another, in order to leave room for the next and more tempting course. I was on the road to becoming an epicure in this house, although finally only too glad to return to my mother's simple fare. In spite of all the favor I gained in this way, I was considered by the count a Jacobin, which title he applied to anybody who had opinions different from his own. His wife—we called her the princess because she came of a princely family—passed her time in devotional exercises, and drove to church every day as many times as her husband permitted her to hitch up, in due rotation, the splendid show horses."

Grillparzer enjoyed, on the whole, his leisurely employment. He made abundant use of the library, particularly rich in English books, which the count's grandfather had brought from London, where he had been ambassador. No one else in the house ever looked at a book, and the only difficulty in using the library to his heart's content lay in turning the rusty key of the library room. Grillparzer's first care was to perfect his knowledge of English, which he had some time before begun to study by himself, in order to be able to read Shakespeare in the original. In the summer he went with the family to their

estates in Moravia. The other tutor having been dismissed, he had to take entire charge of his pupil. He accompanied him daily to church and took along with him the "Vicar of Wakefield," which the family, from the name of "Vicar" on the title-page, supposed to be a devotional book of some sort. In the winter he returned with the young count to the city and continued as his tutor, although he had found, in February, 1813, an unsalaried position in the imperial library of Vienna. During the following summer months, when the library was closed, Grillparzer again joined his pupil at a castle of the family in Moravia. Nearby there was a famous shrine, Maria Stip, much frequented by pious pilgrims. He was compelled to accompany the countess on one of her visits to the church, and caught a chill there. The count's surgeon, suspecting a contagious disease, advised that the patient be isolated, and had him sent to a lonely hut near Maria Stip, where the village barber used to cup those of the pilgrims who required his attention. For a time the surgeon came to see Grillparzer, but soon his visits ceased, and he was left in charge of the village barber. His illness grew desperate and he himself believed that his end was near. When he finally recovered and was able to journey home he heard of the battle of Leipsic. The noble family had fled from the estate. His money was gone; he had seen during his illness a woman open the drawer in which it lay, but thought he was dreaming. He borrowed, however, enough for the trip, which was retarded by the confusion into which the country had been thrown. "No postmaster, no postilion, no innkeeper or waiter was to be found. Everybody was in the streets. The newspapers were read aloud

publicly, people embraced, rejoiced, wept, the millennium seemed to have arrived."

On his return to Vienna he made the impression of one returned from the dead. When he called on the family of his pupil he discovered "not a trace of shame or repentance on their aristocratic faces, although there was a certain embarrassment in their manner." They had engaged a tutor for the young count, but were willing to have Grillparzer continue his special instruction. He resumed his task, devoting himself at the same time heart and soul to the study of languages in the imperial library, where his official duties were of the lightest. The condition of things there was characteristic of the easy-going ways of Viennese officialdom.

"The employees, mostly good-natured persons, conducted themselves pretty much as might old invalid soldiers in an armory; they preserved what they found on hand, showed rare things to visitors, used the slim appropriations for the purchase of all imaginable editions of the classics and kept away, as far as possible, all forbidden, that is to say, all modern, books. Systematic library work was out of the question. All this suited me perfectly. My first care was to add to my knowledge of Greek, which I and my colleague Eichenfeld studied diligently. In order to be undisturbed, we went into the manuscript room of the library, and there, surrounded by all the necessary material, we read the Greek writers. This lasted for some time, until the first custodian of the institution, an intolerable ignoramus, himself without the ability or desire to use a manuscript, got wind of our doings and, impelled by envy at the thought of our possibly editing a manuscript—a

thing he could not dream of doing—forbade us from entering the manuscript room.

"I had in the meantime also devoted myself to another language, the study of which I had begun some time previously, and which was to have the most important influence on my future career. I had always had a conviction that a poet could not be translated into another language. In spite of my bad memory, I had therefore acquired, in addition to the two ancient languages and the indispensable French, a knowledge of Italian and English; and at a very early age, attracted by Bertuch's translation of Don Quixote and his remarks about Spanish poets, I had begun the study of Spanish. I had stumbled upon a very ancient Spanish grammar, so ancient as to antedate Lope de Vega and Calderon and to compel me later on to unlearn and modify the rules thus acquired. Owing to lack of money, I was without a dictionary until I picked up at a second-hand bookshop a volume of Sobrino, which it is true was minus the entire letter A, but which on that account was offered for one florin in paper money. This was scarcely a sufficient equipment for the serious study of the language. About that time there appeared Schlegel's translation of some of the plays of Calderon, among which his 'Devotion at the Cross' chiefly attracted me. However admirable I considered Schlegel's translation of Shakespeare, that of Calderon's plays appeared to me entirely inadequate. That a writer who in his imaginative flights soared almost beyond the reach of poesy could not have indulged in such stiff and awkward phrases, was perfectly clear to me. Armed with all the resources of the imperial library, I threw myself with ardor into the study of Spanish, and attacked it where the diffi-

culties were greatest, that is to say, in the plays of Calderon. In order not to pass lightly over obstacles, and to force myself to look up every new word in the dictionary, I resolved to translate the play I had chosen, 'La vida es sueño,' rendering it, passage for passage, at once into German verse and even, following the original, into rhyme. How much time I consumed in this tedious labor I do not know; at all events I did not get beyond half of the first act; but that sufficed, as the only object of my translation was the study of the language."

It so happened that this very play of Calderon's was then about to be performed in Vienna, and when Grillparzer mentioned to a friend that he had himself tried his hand at translating it, he was induced by him to lend him the manuscript, and, finally, to allow the *Modenzeitung*, an influential literary journal, to print it. Grillparzer's translation appeared the day after the first performance of Calderon's play, and was lauded to the skies by the editor of the *Modenzeitung*, to the disparagement of the other translation. The author of the latter was "Karl August West," the pseudonym of Joseph Schreyvogel, the able secretary and artistic manager of the imperial theatre at Vienna. Schreyvogel, who knew Grillparzer's family, but had never met Franz, was deeply chagrined at the thought that the young man should lend himself to a malicious personal attack on him. When he learned that the translator was entirely guiltless of any such purpose, he expressed a desire to make his acquaintance, and from their first meeting dated the beginning of the close relations between Grillparzer and Schreyvogel which ended only with the death of the latter.

IV

DIE AHNFRAU

IN the course of their first conversation Schreyvogel praised Grillparzer's translation very highly, and asked whether he had ever thought of writing an original drama. The young man confessed that he had composed an "endless tragedy" in his boyhood days, but had since given up all thought of dramatic composition. He finally admitted, however, that he had recently thought of some plot, based on the story of a French robber who made love to a maiden ignorant of his character and antecedents. This incident he had combined with an old fairy story of a young girl, the last descendant of a noble family, who bore so great a resemblance to the spectre of her own ancestress that the girl's lover alternately took one for the other. This plot he related with so much animation as to infect Schreyvogel, who exclaimed enthusiastically: "The play is ready, all you have to do is to write it down." He overruled all the objections interposed by the young writer, who promised to "think about it." The play was to be called "Die Ahnfrau" (The Ancestress).

In the meantime Grillparzer's pecuniary prospects had somewhat improved. Through the instrumentality of Count Herberstein, a high official of the finance department, who had known his father, he had been induced to give up the unsalaried position in the imperial library

and enter the government service in the customs department, where he was entrusted with the duty of cross-examining smugglers and other offenders against the custom laws. He rather enjoyed his present life, as contrasted with his uncongenial duties as instructor to the young count and as subordinate of the tyrannical custodian, and he forgot all about the promise to write a drama. One day, while taking a walk, he met Schreyvogel, who called to him from a distance, "How about your play?" The young man answered sadly: "I can't write at all."

"Schreyvogel," says Grillparzer, "formerly the possessor of considerable wealth, which he lost as an art dealer, had, toward the end of the eighteenth century, through his acquaintance with the victims of the French Revolution, incurred the suspicion of being attached to its principles. Although nothing could be proved against him, he found it advisable, with the sanction of the authorities, to leave Vienna for a time. He went to Jena and Weimar, where he remained for several years, in somewhat close contact with the great literary personages of Germany.

"When I told him: 'I can't write at all,' he replied: 'That is just the answer I gave Goethe when he encouraged me to do literary work; but he told me to roll up my sleeves and go ahead.'

"The words of the great master made a deep impression upon me. If, after making all possible allowance for the difference in native endowment, others could succeed by merely 'rolling up their sleeves,' why should I be doomed to failure? My very soul rebelled against such an assumption. Continuing my walk alone, I pondered over the

'Ahnfrau,' but accomplished nothing beyond the first eight or ten lines, written in trochaic metre, which I had become fond of through my acquaintance with Calderon.

"When I came home and had eaten my supper, I wrote down those eight or ten lines, without any particular purpose in view, and went to bed. A peculiar mental commotion arose within me. I was seized with a fever. During the entire night I threw myself from side to side. I had hardly fallen asleep when I started up again. And yet all this time I had no thought of the 'Ahnfrau,' nor of any part of its plot.

"In the morning I rose as one who feels a severe illness coming on. I breakfasted with my mother and went back to my room. Suddenly my eye caught the paper with the verses written down the day before, which I had completely forgotten. I sat down and wrote on and on, thought and verse coming as if of their own accord, as fast as my pen could travel. The next day I had the same experience, and in three or four days the first act was ready, almost without an erasure.

"I instantly ran to Schreyvogel, to read to him what I had written. He expressed himself as most satisfied, and urged me now more than ever to continue. The second and third acts were written in the same way. I remember that I wrote the great scene in which Jaromir persuades Bertha to flee, from five o'clock in the morning till five in the evening, without a pause and without eating a bite. At breakfast time and at noon my mother knocked in vain at my door. Only toward evening did I leave my room, then strolled over the city ramparts, and late at night I took my dinner.

"Suddenly cold weather set in, and it seemed as though I had lost all ability to think. I betook myself sadly to Schreyvogel, and told him that I knew I could not go on. But he assured me that I would soon do better, and so it happened. After an interruption of two or three days I finished the play as rapidly as I had begun it. I wrote it in not more than fifteen or sixteen days, and then handed it to Schreyvogel, to have him decide as to whether it could be performed. When I called after a few days for his opinion, I found that he had cooled down very materially. Schreyvogel had an excellent mind; he was in some respects, with all due allowances, a sort of Lessing. But in addition to his logical acumen he had this trait in common with his prototype, that his artistic principles were the result of the study of models, rather than of his own spontaneous views. He was now at a loss what to do with my moon-calf and seemed nervous. It was not that he rejected the spectral apparitions or the so-called idea of fate, but he demanded that the latter be properly developed, especially the fact, scarcely touched upon by me, that the family in the play were the direct descendants of the sinful ancestress. As I could not agree with his views, he offered to rewrite the play and make of it a joint production. But against this I protested; it was to be either my play or else not to be performed at all."

Grillparzer, however, finally made the changes suggested by Schreyvogel. The objections to the play raised by the public censor were overcome by influential friends of the celebrated actress, Mme. Schroeder, who had chosen the first performance for her benefit. The Theater an der Wien, which was also under the direction of Schreyvogel,

had among its actors one or two persons who seemed particularly qualified for the parts in the "Ahnfrau," and that stage was therefore chosen for its performance, rather than the Burgtheater.

"At last," writes Grillparzer, "came the day of the first performance (January 31, 1817). I could not be induced to let my name appear on the play-bills. All the street corners contained placards with the announcement of 'Die Ahnfrau, a tragedy in five acts,' but without the name of the author. This in itself was not a good omen. The theatre was half empty and the cash receipts were poor, a fact which Mme. Schroeder—although she needed money badly—never remembered to my discredit; on the contrary, she behaved as though she had earned tons of gold through my instrumentality. She sent me three reserved seats in the first gallery, which were occupied by my mother, my youngest brother, then a boy of eleven or twelve, and myself. The performance, although admirable, made a most dismal impression upon me. I sat as if in a bad dream, and I then and there resolved never more to attend a performance of any of my plays—a resolution which I have up to this day strictly adhered to.* The members of my family behaved most strangely. I myself unconsciously recited the entire play in a low voice. My mother, turning her gaze away from the stage every now and then, exclaimed again and again: 'For Heaven's sake, Franz, calm yourself, you will get sick;' while my little brother, who sat on the other side of her, prayed incessantly."

*This seems to be contradicted by a remark of the actor Costenoble, in his *Recollections*, "Aus dem Burgtheater," concerning the first performance of "The Golden Fleece" (March 27, 1821): "Grillparzer was called before the curtain, came, and bowed."

santly for the success of the play. What added to the disagreeableness of the scene was that there sat among the few spectators on the bench directly behind us a respectable-looking old gentleman, who of course did not know me, and who, although apparently interested in the performance, could not refrain from exclaiming frequently: 'Too gross, altogether too gross.' There was much applause, but only in those scenes which afforded the principal actors an opportunity to display their art. When I went on the stage, after the close of the performance, I entirely disagreed with the actors, who maintained that the play had proved a great success.

"That my opinion was the correct one was shown at the second performance on the following evening, for the theatre was half empty. But the actor Küstner said that I did not know the ways of this theatre. It always took a few days until the public of the *Vorstädte* of Vienna heard of the success of a play. And so it proved. On the evening of the third performance the theatre was literally besieged, and the play produced in Vienna and throughout Germany a tremendous impression.

"In spite of the general interest it evoked, 'Die Ahnfrau' did not yield me more than 500 florins in paper money, paid me by the director of the theatre, besides a similar amount which I received from the publisher, the total being equivalent to 400 silver florins (about \$170). Acting on Schreyvogel's advice, I had given the play to the printer, immediately after the first performance, because the critics misrepresented its contents as well as my aims in the most atrocious manner. All the theatres of Germany therefore played the piece after the printed copy,

with enormous benefit to their treasury, but not one of them thought of offering me any share whatever in the receipts. However, what I got in Vienna served to defray some of our household expenses. We paid the rent for our dwelling, then about due, and I kept for myself only fifty florins in paper money, for which I bought the Brunswick edition of Shakespeare and Heyne's *Iliad*."

"Die Ahnfrau" established Grillparzer's reputation, and yet it clouded his literary fame through life; for it allied him, in the opinion of the uncritical, long after he had sought other themes, with the so-called fate tragedians Müllner and Werner, whose gruesome productions shed their gloom over the German stage during the early decades of the last century. Great, indeed, must have been the literary skill of the young author which triumphed over the horrors of so dismal a plot as that of the "Ahnfrau." Its outlines are as follows:

The ghost of the ancestress of Count Borodin haunts the castle where he and his daughter Bertha live, the last descendants of their race. The ancestress had been murdered by her husband, whom she had betrayed. Bertha falls in love with a stranger who had rescued her in the woods from the hands of bandits. It is Jaromir, the chief of the outlaws—her own brother, who had been kidnapped in infancy. Count Borodin, who pursues the robbers, is killed by Jaromir. Bertha puts an end to her life, and Jaromir dies in the fatal embrace of the ghost of the ancestress, which he mistakes for Bertha. Thus is the guilt of the house of Borodin avenged by its extinction.

Grillparzer, as has been seen, wrote his play in scarcely more than two weeks, and it has all the merits and some

of the defects of a composition struck off at such fever heat. His impassioned diction and the melody of his trochaic tetrameter have not wholly lost their power to charm, even in the case of modern audiences; the exposition and the development of the plot manifest the firm grasp of the born dramatist, while the occasional crudity of thought and redundancy of metaphor are no more glaring, it may be urged, than are similar defects in Schiller's first dramatic effort, "Die Räuber." Reminiscent borrowing of characters and situations may be looked for in the youthful effusions of all dramatists. The bandit brother and lover brings before our mind Schiller's "Bride of Messina," just as the killing of his father recalls King Œdipus, while the fateful dagger, stained with the blood of preceding generations, which accomplishes the extinction of the house of Borodin, revives the memory of Werner's once famous fate tragedy, "The 24th of February."

With all its defects, "Die Ahnfrau" has to this day stood the supreme test of all plays intended for the stage—the power to hold and move an audience. Ehrhard has explained the secret of its success as follows: "No model could furnish Grillparzer with that which made the success of his play. In addition to genuine inspiration drawn from real life, there are dramatic qualities of the first order, a marvellous knowledge of scenic effect, a rapid action whose interest never flags, an irresistible warmth, a diction full of animation and poetry, which did not need to enrich itself with adornments borrowed from Schiller." For nearly a century the "Ahnfrau" has been relegated by literary historians to the lumber-room of forgotten

melodramas, yet again and again it reappears on the stage, in undiminished strength. "During three generations," says Prof. Emil Reich, "dull malice has vainly spent itself against its extraordinary descriptive skill and the powerful development of its plot."

In composing "Die Ahnfrau," Grillparzer was as far from any intention of enforcing a particular ethical theory as was Goethe when he wrote his "Werther," and "Die Ahnfrau" was even more fiercely attacked for its un-Christian doctrines than had been the pagan sentiments of his illustrious predecessor. Even learned theologians joined in the hue and cry, which vainly attempted to drown the plaudits of the public.

It is quite likely that, consciously or unconsciously, the forbidding sombreness of "Die Ahnfrau" was the direct result of the atmosphere in which its author wrote it. He lived at that time in a district significantly known as "Das Elend" (The Misery), a group of gloomy old houses, which have now disappeared. The young poet may have felt, while revolving the plot of his play, that the hand of fate rested heavily on his own family, whose last member he was destined to be.

V

SAPPHO

Strung by the ignorant hostility of his critics, Grillparzer, as we learn from his autobiography, determined to choose for his next play "the simplest possible story, in order to prove to the world and to myself that I could produce an effect by sheer poetic power. But I found no such story, perhaps only because I looked for none. My soul was embittered. I felt that I had come as the last poet into a prosaic age. Schiller, at the memorial celebration of whose death, at the Kärnthnerthor Theater, I had nearly lost my own life, my chest being almost crushed by the crowd against a half-open door—Schiller was dead, and Goethe had turned to science, devoting himself, in his grandly contemplative way, to indifferent subjects, powerless to impress the world; while within me burned all the fires of fantasy. Spring and summer passed in dreamy idleness. Toward the beginning of autumn I was taking a walk in the Prater along the Danube. Near the first group of trees I met Dr. Joel, who told me that Kapellmeister Weigel was anxious to find a good libretto. He thought that my poetry, combined with Weigel's music, would, etc., etc. He himself, he said, had found a splendid plot for an opera. While I had not the faintest desire to furnish such a libretto, I asked him what the plot was. He said it was the story of Sappho. I immediately replied that this would also be a good subject for a tragedy. He,

however, thought that there were too few incidents in the story. Thus we separated; he turned toward the city, and I continued my walk in the Prater.

"The mention of Sappho had struck me with singular force. Here was the simple story I was in search of. I rambled farther and farther into the Prater, and when I returned home late in the evening, the plan of the tragedy was ready. Next day I asked in the imperial library for the extant fragments of Sappho's poems, and found that one of the two complete ones, that addressed to the goddess of love, was perfectly suited to my purpose. I translated it then and there, and next morning I began work in good earnest."

Grillparzer completed "Sappho" in less than three weeks. He had been well prepared for the task. When the critics of the "Ahnfrau" reproached him with misunderstanding the Greek fate, he returned with the utmost zeal to the study of the great Greek tragedians. The æsthetic teachings of Lessing and Winckelmann further chastened his taste, and Goethe's "Tasso" and "Iphigenie" left their unmistakable imprint on "Sappho." But Grillparzer's tragedy is far from being an imitation of either Greek or German models. While based on the ancient legend, it is wholly modern in the development of its characters. There are certain resemblances between Mme. de Staël's "Corinne" and Grillparzer's "Sappho." He retained from the legend of antiquity the story of Sappho's unrequited love for Phaon, and of her suicidal leap from the Leucadian cliff to that grave which, in Swinburne's language, "hides too deep the supreme head of song." He added the character of Melitta, Sappho's





slave attendant, a creation to which he lent much of the charm of Goethe's Mignon, a young girl irresistible in her simple loveliness, which is but heightened by the melancholy due to her forcible separation from her native shores. // ✓

The opening scenes of the play show us Sappho in the fulness of her triumph at the Attic games. But she values the acclamations of the populace chiefly for the sake of Phaon, the youth who accompanies her, and whom she ennobles by her love. Phaon discloses the origin of his affection for her in impassioned language:

Since thought first came, since first my feeble hand
Coaxed immature the lyre's melodious wealth,
Thy god-like image stood before my eyes.
When at my parents' humble hearth I sat,
Their children all joined in a sweet content,
And then Theano, my good sister, rose,
To fetch the parchment from the corniced shelf;
And when thy song, O Sappho, she entoned,
A silence deep fell on the noisy youths,
And closer pressed the maidens' eager group,
To garner in each golden grain of song.
And when she reached the fervent glowing strain
Of love for him, the youth in beauty clad,
Of how the goddess poured her longing plaint
Into the silence of the lonely night;
When of Andromeda the fate she told,
How each drank in her words, each bosom swelled
With rising bliss, the listening heart intent
To hush the only sound—each beating pulse.
Mayhap Theano then her head reclined
Back in her chair and gazed with musing eye
Into the circling darkness, and she spoke:
"God-like, what may her outward features be?
Methinks I see her. By the gods above

Among a thousand I should know her form."
 Released from long restraint each fettered tongue,
 Each now his fancy urged to dower thee
 With added beauty, as his choice might prompt.
 One gave thee Pallas' eye, the other Hera's arm,
 One Aphrodite's magic girdle lent.
 But I alone arose and silent stepped
 Into the sacred solitude of night,
 And drawn within the witchery of her realm,
 My senses captive in her sweet repose,
 My arms for thee I spread in longing vain.
 And when above my brow the fleecy clouds,
 The gentle zephyr's breath, the mountain dew,
 The paling silver of the moon beyond—
 When all this melted into every sense,
 Then wast thou mine, then felt I thy approach,
 And Sappho's image throned above the clouds.

✓ But Phaon's worship of Sappho is in reality an admiration for the poetess which he shares with all Greece. He sees in her merely the goddess; of the woman, older than himself, he soon tires. He first notices Melitta at the festive board, where, in passing the cup to him, she is seized with confusion at the sight of the fair youth and spills the contents on the floor. The din of the celebration wearies him. He escapes from the feast, and in solitude gives vent to his vague unrest and his longing for his parents. Melitta is reproved by Sappho for her seeming indifference toward the attractions of Phaon. Sappho, in the fervency of her love for him, would have the whole world see him with her own eyes. She calls:

17142 Melitta, hearest thou?
 Melitta.

What, O my mistress?

Sappho.

Do then my veins alone run warm with blood,
While ice chokes up the hearts of all the rest?
They saw him, heard his voice, the self-same air
That fanned his brow their lifeless bosoms breathed,
And a dull-sounding "What, O mistress?"
Is all their lips reluctantly give forth!
Indeed, I almost hate thee for it. Go!

(Melitta turns to go.)

Sappho (throwing herself upon a grassy slope).

And canst thou tell me nothing then, Melitta,
That might rejoice my heart? O speak, dear child!
Thou saw'st him—didst thou not? and was there nought
Deserving to be seen and talked about?
Didst thou not use thy eyes, thou silly child?

Melitta is drawn to the same spot which Phaon had
sought, by an equal longing for her own home. Her
plaintive call to the gods is overheard by Phaon.

Phaon.

So young still and so full of sadness,

Melitta (frightened).

Oh!

Phaon.

I heard thee praying to the gods just now
For friendly sympathy. Here is a friend.
An equal sorrow joins like equal blood,
And those who suffer everywhere are kin.
I, too, miss longingly the fondest parents,
I, too, am homewards drawn by sadness' might.
Come, let us hear each other's tale, that sorrow,
Thus interchanged, become a mutual balm.
Thou'rt silent? Why suspicious, gentle maiden?
Look up at me! No harm is in my thought.

(He takes hold of her chin and raises her head.)

Ah! Is it you then who passed 'round the cup
And 'stead of me did cool the polished floor?

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Hence so afraid? Forget thy merry blunder!

Thy mistress laughed at it, no less than I.

(Melitta, who seemed startled at the last remark, first looks down, then casts a glance at Phaon, and turns to go.)

Phaon.

I did not mean to give offence, dear child.

Can such a gentle eye so serious look?

Thou must reply to me, I do insist.

I noticed thee before this—at the feast.

Thy lovely stillness, maiden, shone above

The tumult wild of the carousing guests.

Who art thou? And what keeps thee in this place?

Thou sat'st not at the table, but didst serve;

The slaves familiarly addressed thee, seeming thus

To mark thee their companion, and yet—

Melitta.

That am I! *(She turns to go.)*

Phaon (keeping her back). Nay!

Melitta.

What ask you of the slave?

Let her with slaves seek kindred solace—and—

Take me to you, to you take me, ye gods!

Phaon.

Thou art disturbed, thou tremblest. Calm thyself!

The fetters of a slave tie but the hands,

The mind alone makes free, and makes the slave.

Be quiet! Sappho gentle is and kind;

One word from me, and thou without a ransom

May'st, free, return to thy paternal home.

(Melitta silently shakes her head.)

Phaon.

P.H. Believe me, she will free thee. Or perhaps
The fervid longing for thy fatherland,
That first so moved thee, has already fled?

Melitta.

My fatherland! Ah, tell me where it is!

Phaon.

Thou know'st it not?

Melitta.

In early childhood days
Was snatched away I from its tender soil;
Its flowers only and its vales retains
My memory, its name is strange to me,
But it lies there whence comes to us the sun,
For light was there and all was beautiful.

Phaon.

Is it then far from here?

Melitta.

Far, very far!
There was surrounded I by other trees,
And other flowers filled the air with fragrance,
More beautiful the stars were in the heavens,
And kindly were the people that there dwelt.
Among many children lived I, still a child,
And there was, too, alas! an aged man,
With silvery locks, and father him I called.
He fondled me, and there was still another,
So fair to see, and of so gentle mien,
Brown was his hair and eye, almost like—thine.

Phaon.

Why stopp'st thou? And that man?

Melitta.

He too—

Phaon.

Caressed thee,

Like this. (*He seizes her hand.*)

Melitta (in a low voice).

I was a child.

Phaon.

I know full well,
A dear, sweet child, unconscious of itself.
Continue! (*He drops her hand.*)

Melitta.

And thus all was right and good.
 But once awoke I in the night. Wild screams
 From all sides fiercely beat upon my ear.
 My nurse approached my bed, I was picked up,
 And carried out away into the darkness.
 Around me see I cabins flaming up,
 And men are fighting, and they flee and fall.
 And now a madman furious grasps at me,
 And there is anguish, shrieking, battle cry.
 When next remembrance comes I'm on a ship,
 Which in the night glides swiftly through the sea,
 And children heard I cry and maidens, too.
 But fewer grew in number they, poor things,
 The farther was our country left behind.
 And thus we sailed on many days and nights,
 Yes, months perhaps. And then I was alone,
 Of all the wretched lot, with those wild men,
 Till finally there faced us Lesbos' coast.
 There was I put ashore. There saw I Sappho,
 She offered gold for me, and hers became Melitta.

Phaon.

Was then thy lot so sad in Sappho's hands?

Melitta.

O no, 'twas not. With kindness she received me,
 She dried my tears, and gave me loving care,
 And fondly taught me, for though sometimes rash,
 And quick of temper, bitter for a moment,
 Kind Sappho is and sweet, yes, truly kind.

Phaon.

And yet ne'er couldst thy country thou forget?

Melitta.

Alas! too soon did I forget my home!
 For what with dance and play and household duties,
 I seldom thought of those whom I had left.
 But sometimes, when oppressed I am by sorrow,

Then longing steals into my aching heart,
And memory, with sweet yet painful hand,
Unveils the past that lies in golden haze.
And thus it was to-day. I felt so timid,
Each lightly spoken word upon me fell
With wounding weight, as on raw flesh and fibre,
And—yet, all now is well, and I am glad.

(A voice calls from within.)

Melitta!

Phaon.

Hear! They call!

Melitta.

They call? I come.

(She drops the flowers and the wreath she had begun to make.)

Phaon.

What is this?

Melitta.

Flowers, thou seest.

Phaon.

And for whom?

Melitta.

For thee—for thee and Sappho.

Phaon.

Stay!

Melitta.

They call.

Phaon.

Thou must not leave from here with frowning look!
Show me thy flowers!

Melitta.

Here!

Phaon *(taking out a rose)*.

Take thou this rose!

(He fastens it to her bosom.)

Let it remind thee of the hour now passed,

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Remind thee that not only in thy home,
That in the far-off land are also friends.

(Melitta, who shuddered as he touched her, stands now motionless, with heaving bosom, her arms hanging down, and her head bowed. Phaon, a few steps apart, has his eyes fixed upon her.)

(A voice from within.) Melitta!

Melitta.

Did you call?

Phaon.

Not I. Within—

Melitta *(picking up the wreaths she had dropped)*.

I'm coming.

Phaon.

Why so niggardly, Melitta?

Deserves my gift no gift from thee in turn?

Melitta.

A gift from me? What owns my poverty?

Phaon.

Gold vanity bestows, and so does pride;

The gift of friendship and of love is flowers,

And flowers thou hast here.

Melitta *(throwing away the flowers)*.

How? these thou wouldst,

Plucked by those maidens wild, that destined were—

No, never!

Phaon.

Then what else wilt thou bestow?

Melitta.

How they have ravaged all these bushes here!

No trace is left of e'en a single flower.

(She stands before a rosebush and looks up.)

There hangs a rose, I see, on yonder branch,

But far too high for me, I cannot reach it.

Phaon.

I'll lend a helping hand.

Melitta.

No, do not!

Phaon.

Why!

So lightly I do not give up my claim.

Melitta (*mounting upon the grassy slope*).

Come then! And toward thee I'll bend the branch.

Phaon.

Just so!

Melitta (*who is lifted up by him so as to stand on tiptoe, and bends down the branch at the end of which is the rose*).

Dost reach?

Phaon (*who, without paying attention to the rose, looks only at Melitta*).

Not yet.

Melitta.

Now!—O, I slip!

I fall!

Phaon.

No; see, I hold thee!

(*The branch slips from her hands and bounds upwards; she sways and sinks into Phaon's arms, which he opens wide to receive her.*)

Melitta.

O leave me!

Phaon (*pressing her to his bosom*).

Melitta!

Melitta.

Woe is me! Leave me!

Phaon.

Melitta!

(*He presses a kiss on her lips.*)

Sappho (*entering, simply dressed, without wreath or lyre*).

Must I then look for thee, my friend? But what see I?

Melitta.

Hark! 'Tis my mistress!

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Phaon.

How? Is Sappho here?
(*He relinquishes Melitta.*)

Sappho (after a pause).

Melitta!

Melitta.

Mistress mine!

Sappho.

What seek'st thou here!

Melitta.

I looked for flowers.

Sappho.

And not without success!

Melitta.

This rose—

Sappho.

This rose—it burns upon thy lips.

Melitta.

It hangs so high.

Sappho.

Perhaps not high enough.

Go!

Melitta.

And shall I perhaps—?

Sappho.

Go, say I, go!
(*Exit Melitta.*)

Sappho, still unsuspecting, and blind to the change in Phaon's feelings toward her, entreats him not to arouse a dangerous sentiment in the heart of one whom she loves almost as a child:

No maiden, brought to me by fate's caprice,
Was dear to me as has Melitta been,
A maiden sweet and gentle in her thought.

Her mind not deep nor rich, nor yet endowed
With skill to exercise a varied art.
She won my heart as no one else has won,
By artless ways and unpretending worth.

Sappho's jealousy is not aroused until, while bending over Phaon to imprint a kiss on his brow, she hears him utter Melitta's name in a dream. Phaon, who is unconscious of the depth of his affection for Melitta, just as he was ignorant of his real sentiments toward Sappho, relates to her innocently the dream in which Melitta appeared to him. In an interview with Melitta, Sappho's jealousy bursts into flame, and she threatens her with a dagger. Phaon appears in time to save Melitta. Sappho decides to transport her secretly to the isle of Chios, but Phaon discovers her design and flees with Melitta. They are overtaken and brought back. Sappho recognizes that she was not destined to enjoy earthly love,

Whoe'er is chosen by the gods as theirs,
The mortal throng must shun forevermore,

and she plunges from the cliff into the sea, with the parting prayer:

Be yours each flowering joy; think well of her
Who willing now repays her life's last debt.
Bless them, ye gods, and take me to your heights!

"Sappho," which was first performed at the Burgtheater on April 21, 1818, was the play Grillparzer himself liked best of all his works, and it has perhaps retained a stronger hold on the public than those of his tragedies which surpass it in dramatic power. As an illustration of the vagaries of dramatic criticism, it may be interesting

to compare the varied impressions produced by the play on some of the contemporaries of the young author.

Lord Byron, among foreign critics, was one of the most enthusiastic in its praise. In an entry in his diary, under date of January 12, 1821, he wrote: "Read the Italian translation by Guido Sorelli of the German Grillparzer—a devil of a name, to be sure, for posterity, but they *must* learn to pronounce it. With all the allowance for translation, . . . the tragedy of 'Sappho' is superb and sublime! And who is he? I know him not, but ages will." Carlyle in an article on "German Playwrights," written in 1829, speaks of Grillparzer, in his irritatingly patronizing way, as "a most inoffensive man, nay, positively rather meritorious. 'Sappho,' which we are sorry to hear is not his last piece, but his second, appears to us very considerably the most faultless production of his we are yet acquainted with. There is a degree of grace and simplicity in it, a softness, polish and general good taste, little to be expected from the author of 'Die Ahnfrau.'" In Germany, Tieck and Solger, considered weighty critics in their day, treated the young dramatist with the utmost contempt. Solger, whose æsthetic pretensions annoyed Schiller and Goethe not a little, wrote after a performance of "Sappho": "I must mention that monstrosity. The favor it meets with is astounding. My wife and I would have laughed outright over it had we not been so greatly bored."

Modern criticism assigns to "Sappho" a very high rank among the dramatic masterpieces of German literature. Rudolf Gottschall, who is very grudging in his praise of Grillparzer, places "Sappho" very close to Goethe's "Iphigenie." A certain inner parallelism heightens the

resemblance between the two dramas; but if Iphigenie affords us vague glimpses of one of Goethe's passionate attachments, Sappho's plaint is almost literal in its sad recital of Grillparzer's misfortunes:

To lose and to renounce has been my lot.
 My parents early sank into their grave,
 Their children followed to the nether world,
 By fate's decree and also by their guilt,
 Which sorely wounded oft my faithful heart.
 I know the torture of ingratitude,
 Deceptive love and friendship false and base;
 Their anguish has my bosom learned to bear.
 To lose and to renounce has been my lot.

In more than one of his lyrics recurs this melancholy note, as in his "Entsagung" (Resignation):

Mankind's eternal fate is resignation,
 No joys are thine but those thou hast renounced.

Sappho has often challenged comparison with Goethe's Tasso. We find in both the same conflict between art and actuality, but Grillparzer's heroine is dramatically a more effective impersonation of the poet struggling against hopeless passion than Goethe's hero. "Tasso shows nowhere," says Volkelt, "such clearness and significance in his attitude toward life." That the conclusion of "Sappho" is disappointing, ethically rather than dramatically, may be granted. We feel that her death is not called for by the situation. Phaon, to put it bluntly, is scarcely worth dying for. He tells Sappho:

If love I vowed thee, 'twas without deception:
 I loved thee as methinks one loves the gods,
 Loves what is noble, what is beautiful,

One can hardly help suspecting that she ends her life rather from chagrin at having thrown away her affection on one so immeasurably beneath her than because her dwelling place is with the gods.

Grillparzer himself, who was ever his own justest critic, is far from claiming perfection for the manner in which he treated his theme. He recognizes the lack of action in the first two acts and admits that the first, especially, has in reality little dramatic life. But his own preference for the play, as the one, above all others, written with the completest spontaneity and joy in the mere creating, is abundantly justified by its extraordinary poetic beauties, and a perfection of form perhaps unequalled in any drama produced by so youthful an author.

VI

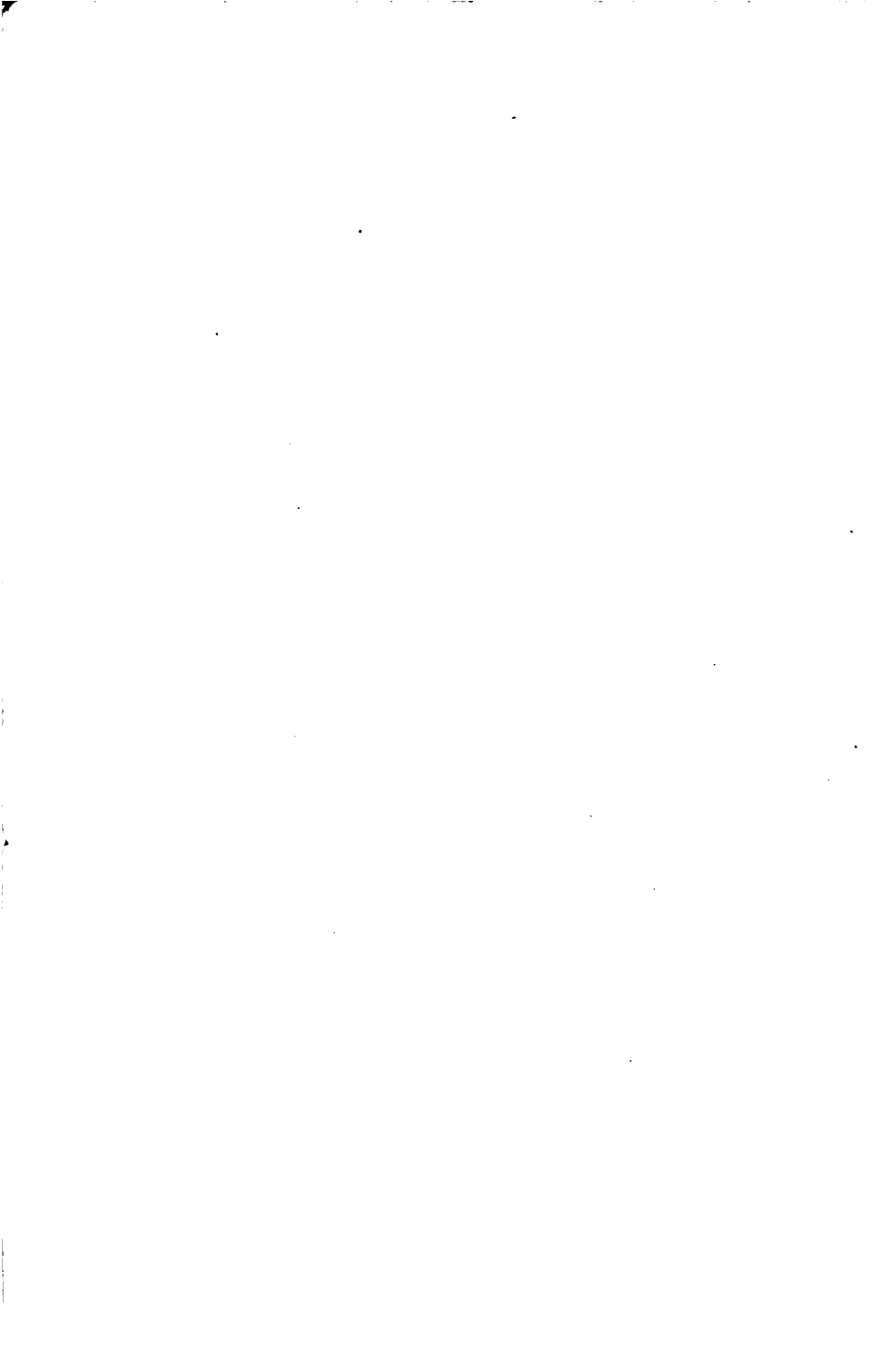
DAS GOLDENE VLISS

"SAPPHO," like "Die Ahnfrau," was triumphantly produced on many German stages, but the pecuniary results which the play yielded to the author were insignificant. One court theatre sent him about six dollars as his royalty. Nor was the income from the sale of his printed works worth mentioning. From a sentiment of patriotism, he refused the offers of German publishers and clung to his unenterprising Vienna bookseller. His growing fame resulted, however, in an improvement in his official position, through the favor of Count Stadion, the Minister of Finance, one of the few enlightened bureaucrats then in high office. He caused him to be appointed dramatic writer to the Burgtheater, with an annual salary of 2,000 paper florins, equivalent to about 400 dollars. Prince Metternich also became interested in him and promised to smooth his official path. "I might have been the idol of the mighty in the state," is Grillparzer's remark, "had I never written a line about anything else but the fortunes of simple-minded lovers. But scarcely did I overstep these bounds when I was persecuted by everybody." Through the mistaken good-will of Count Stadion he was transferred to another department in the Ministry of Finance, where he was brought into contact with insolent superiors. He became ill, and while recuperating in the country, in

the summer of 1818, accident threw in his way a dictionary of mythology, in which the legend of Medea arrested his attention. The subject seemed to him eminently adapted to fuller dramatic treatment than Euripides and his modern imitators, with some of whom he was familiar, had given it, and he conceived the plan of a trilogy based on the quest for the golden fleece. He was then unaware that Schiller, in a letter to Goethe written in 1798, had pointed out the story of Medea as a rich and still unexplored field for the dramatist "if treated in its entirety and as a cycle." Grillparzer prepared himself for his task by the most painstaking study of ancient sources—Apollonius Rhodius's "Argonautica," Strabo's "Geography," and Valerius Flaccus's epic. He divided his subject into three parts, "Der Gastfreund" (The Guest), "Die Argonauten" and "Medea." The work was carried on with his usual rapidity. He wrote the one-act "Gastfreund" between the 29th of September and the 5th of October, 1818, and the first three acts of "Die Argonauten" between the 20th of October and the 3d of November. Then his labors were interrupted by the illness of his mother, which terminated in her death, on the 24th of January, 1819. Her loss was a crushing blow to him, all the more so because, as is now considered certain, she had terminated her life in a fit of insanity. His own version, in his autobiography, is that he found her one night standing, half-dressed, near her bed. He addressed her, but received no answer, and discovered to his horror that she was dead.

"What I felt," wrote Grillparzer, "can only be imagined by one who knew the almost idyllic nature of our common





life. After she had no longer any resources of her own, I provided for all the necessities of our home, and thus I was to her both son and husband. She had no will but mine, nor did it ever enter my mind to impose upon her a wish that was not hers. All domestic matters were left to her absolute decision, but on the other hand she refrained from any interference in the domain of my thoughts, sentiments, convictions—in whatever related to my work. According to custom at the time of her youth, she had received very little so-called education—in those days learning was a thing scarcely thought of for women—but artistically endowed as she was, she could interest herself in everything, and her mind was receptive even in directions where her knowledge was deficient. Judging from the harmony of our relations, I may say that a wedded life would not have been contrary to my nature, although I was not to enter into it. There is within me something yielding and conciliatory that inclines me only too much to the guidance of others, but constant disturbance or interference in my inner life I do not tolerate; I could not bear it even if I made up my mind to it. In married life I should have required to be let alone, forgetting that my wife had a personality of her own, though I should gladly have shown myself willing to contribute my share toward removing any causes of mutual misunderstanding. But to be one of two would have been impossible to my solitary nature. At one time it seemed as though such a relationship might be formed, but it was nipped in the bud, Heaven knows through no fault of mine."

To turn his mind from his grief, he went to Italy, .

where he became acquainted with Count Wurmbrand, lord-steward of the Empress Caroline Augusta of Austria, who was then travelling in that country with the emperor. The count was anxious to introduce Grillparzer to the empress, and on their arrival at Rome, where quarters had been prepared for the lord-steward in the Quirinal, Wurmbrand, in order to keep Grillparzer near him, let it be known that the poet was secretary to the empress. This deception, which was not at all to Grillparzer's liking, and of which he only heard later on, led to disagreeable complications on the poet's return to Vienna.

During his stay in Italy Grillparzer enjoyed the honor of being invited to dine with Prince Metternich. "I mention this circumstance," he writes, "solely because of a remarkable incident which occurred on that occasion. The prince was, as always, very amiable. After dinner, while coffee was being served, he recited with real enthusiasm, and from memory, in English, the entire fourth canto of Lord Byron's 'Childe Harold.' That canto had then just appeared, and was still unknown to me. Metternich's daughter, the Countess Esterhazy, since deceased, occasionally prompted him, likewise from memory."

On his return to Vienna Grillparzer once more became the victim of bureaucratic persecution, being tossed about, in wilful disregard of his wishes, between the Ministry of Finance and the department dealing with the affairs of the court theatres. Still greater annoyances arose from the publication of several lyric poems written in Italy, in one of which, inspired by the Forum, and entitled "The Ruins of Campo Vaccino," he had contrasted

the classic age with the clericism superimposed upon it, thereby incurring the displeasure of the public censor. The emperor himself, as well as Metternich, joined in the official denunciation of the poet. The indignation of the emperor was all the greater because the poem had appeared in an almanac dedicated to a Bavarian princess, and the Munich court had sent to the Austrian government a protest against the laxity of the Vienna censor in permitting the publication of such anti-Christian sentiments. All the unsold copies of the almanac were thereupon seized and the obnoxious pages torn out.

"Unfortunately," wrote Grillparzer, "this measure failed to attain the desired end. Four hundred complete copies had already been sent to other countries, and lovers of prohibited literature and scandal of whatever kind endeavored to bring them back at any cost. Those who could not buy a perfect volume borrowed one and wrote out a copy of my poem, and as a result nothing from my pen has ever had such a circulation in my fatherland as this poem, which, if left unnoticed, would have been thoughtlessly swallowed by the public with no greater relish than if it had been so much grass."

As a public official, Grillparzer was peremptorily summoned by the president of the police to explain his conduct. "It would have been easy enough," he wrote, "to defend myself. The poem had received the *imprimatur* of the public censor, and that completely exculpated me as the author. But that merely meant shifting the responsibility to the shoulders of the censor, in this instance my friend Schreyvogel, and this was not to be thought of. I therefore handed the president of the police a memoran-

dum in which I gathered together everything that could possibly be said by way of justification of intent and expression."

The document is a manly and very able plea for the right of the poet to give utterance to his momentary thought, but his learned distinctions between the functions of poetry and history were lost upon the ignoramuses and time-servers of Austrian officialdom. The poet was from now on a spotted man. "Henceforth," he wrote, "every vagabond thought himself licensed to attack and malign me." He was popularly known as an enemy of the Pope, and when, in 1821, he applied for a position in the private library of the emperor, Francis remarked: "Yes, he might do well enough for the place if he hadn't had that affair with the Pope."

In the midst of all these tribulations Grillparzer resumed work on his trilogy. "My disagreeable experiences," he wrote, "did not dampen my ardor in the composition of the dramatic poem. I remember that the verses which Creusa recites in the second act of 'Medea'—the favorite song of Jason—were written by me in pencil, in the antechamber of the president of the police while I was expecting a stormy audience. As I felt that my excitement and anger would soon give way to reaction and discouragement, I hurried to the conclusion as rapidly as possible, and I know that I wrote each of the last two acts of 'Medea' in two days. When I had finished (on the 20th of January, 1820) I was thoroughly exhausted, and without rewriting the play or making any further changes, beyond those I had made while writing, I carried the barely legible manuscript to Schreyvogel. After

reading it, he remained silent for a long time, and finally remarked that my queer production ought to be laid aside for a while. With my usual indifference to the fate of my works, I tried to dismiss all troublesome thoughts of the present and future by seeking diversion of every kind, and also by turning to the ancient writers and to Kant's philosophy, with which I had only recently become acquainted. While I was thus engaged, Schreyvogel suddenly made his appearance, embraced me, and said that 'The Golden Fleece' was to be put upon the stage without any delay. What had caused him to change his opinion, I do not know. It may be that he could not at first easily read the badly written manuscript, or that it was only on a second reading that he entered into my deliberately planned purpose of fusing in my work—whimsical though it may be—the romantic and the classic. However, we never discussed this point. At all events that excellent man, to whom I am so greatly indebted, may well have been displeased at my handing him my play as a finished product, ready to be performed, without subjecting it first to his criticism. I should have been stupid indeed had the opinions of such a friend concerning matters of detail been indifferent to me; but I knew from experience that his *desiderata* concerned the essence of the plays, and as to that, I wanted to reserve perfect freedom of action, even at the risk of making a mistake.

"This feeling of independence has always kept me away from literary coteries. With two exceptions, no journalist or literary celebrity has ever received a letter from me, and those two letters I wrote by way of reply. I have always stood alone, and therefore I was at first attacked on

all sides, and later on ignored. I bore this treatment with proud disdain, although it subsequently lessened my pleasure in the creation of new works. I may add here that in mingling, as stated, the romantic and classic in my play, nothing was further from my mind than a silly purpose to imitate either Shakespeare or any other poet of his time. What I intended to do was to bring out as clearly as possible the difference between Colchis and Greece, a difference which forms the basis of the tragedy, and which caused me to employ here and there, alternately, the iambic measure and an unfettered metre, expressive, as it were, of a different idiom."

The trilogy was performed on the 26th and 27th of March, 1821. Grillparzer records in his autobiography a barely moderate success. The first and second parts, "Der Gastfreund" and "Die Argonauten," are rarely seen on the stage nowadays, while "Medea" has remained one of the most popular and effective of German tragedies.

"The Guest" is in the nature of a prologue. We see in the wilds of Colchis Medea, daughter of King Æetes, leading a life of untamed freedom. She is in communion with supernatural powers and defies the restraints of human society. Her inflexible will clashes with the behests of her father, a barbarian ruler, yet, in his rude way, a lover of his country. The opening scene shows Medea and her weird nurse, Gora, in the act of offering a deer as a sacrifice to the goddess Darimba. At the conclusion of the ceremony Medea summons her attendants to the chase. Peritta, who has earned her mistress' contempt by renouncing her liberty and following her lover, is banished from Medea's presence. She kneels before her.

Medea.

Kneel not! Thou shalt not kneel!
Hear'st thou? I blush with very shame for thee.
So cowardly, so tame! Not that I've lost thee
Fills me with pain, but that I must despise
Whom formerly I loved.

Peritta.

O if you knew!

Medea.

Knew what? Didst recently not steal away,
The chase forsaking, down the Tergene valley,
To seek the shepherds? Speak, ungrateful one!
Didst thou not promise to be mine forever,
Not any man's? Speak, didst thou promise me?

Peritta.

When thus I vowed, could I then know—

Medea.

Be silent!

What need of knowing more than that you promised!
Æetes' royal daughter is Medea,
And what I do is right because I do it;
And yet, thou false one, had I promised thee
This hand of mine to cut from off my arm,
I'd do the deed, forsooth, because I promised.

Peritta.

Resistless fate drove me unconscious on
Against my will, indeed against—

Medea.

Indeed!

She would not, yet she did— Go, silly one!
How could it happen if thy wish forbade?
What I do I have wished, and what I wish—
Well, that perchance I sometimes leave undone.
Go back into thy shepherd's stuffy cabin,
There squat thee down in smoke and wretched squalor,
And cabbage raise upon an inch of ground!
My garden is th' illimitable earth,
The sky's blue pillars mark my dwelling place.

There shall I stand, around me the free hills,
 And drink their air with unimprisoned breast,
 And looking down on thee, despise thee, girl.
 Ho! To the woods, ye maidens! To the woods!

Medea's fierceness leaps into flame when she is told by her father that strangers have arrived from a foreign land, bearing rich treasure, and intent on laying waste the land. "Go and kill them," is her advice to *Æetes*, but she will not stoop to the treachery planned by him toward the leader of the invaders, *Phrixus*, the Greek. The latter comes bearing aloft the fateful golden fleece which he had stripped from a statue of the God *Peronto* at Delphi, in obedience to a dream. *Peronto* is the patron deity of Colchis, and when *Phrixus* bends his knee before his statue and thanks him for his protection, *Æetes's* religious jealousy is added to his greed, and he resolves on the destruction of the stranger who invokes his hospitality. Medea vainly protests against the murder. *Phrixus's* dying curse bespeaks misery and death for the children of the man who has so vilely betrayed his guest. *Æetes*, terror-stricken, would fain force the fleece, which portended the ruin of his house, upon his lifeless victim, and Medea, repeating with gruesome emphasis *Phrixus's* curse, foretells the awful doom that is impending.

The expedition of the Argonauts, led by the war-like Jason, is the theme of the second part of the trilogy. The golden fleece is buried in a cave guarded by a dragon. Medea has foreseen the coming of the avengers. *Æetes* and his son *Absyrtus* appeal to her to avert their fate and consult the gods. In the gloomy tower which is her retreat she reluctantly invokes the powers of darkness:

Medea (a black staff in her right hand, a lamp in her left).

It is so sultry here, so gloomy!
A humid vapor oppresses the flame,
It burns, but gives no light.

(She puts the lamp down.)

Hark! It is my own heart
That loudly beats against my breast.
Weak and silly I am! Arouse thee, Medea!
My father's cause is at stake, the cause of the gods.
Shall strangers be victorious? Is Colchis doomed?
Never, never!
Begin then thy work!
Attend me, ye gods!
Hear me, and answer my question!

(She makes signs in the air with her staff.)

Ye who walk clad in the robes of night,
And march on the wings of the storm,
Dread princes of the deep,
Who approve of resolve
And deliberate deed,
Who with corpses abide,
And drink the blood of the slain;
Who know the heart's secret and bend the will;
Who count each blade of the present,
And garner the harvest of the past,
And foresee the budding crop of the future—
To you I call!
Announce to me clearly
What threatens our safety, what smiles on our fate.
By the power I wield,
By the deed I have done,
By the word that ye know,
I call to you:
Appear, appear!

(A pause.)

What means this? All is silence.

They do not appear?
 Have I offended you, or has human foot,
 A violating foot,
 Entered this sacred spot?
 I am filled with alarm, I am seized with a shudder!
 Ye who are all powerful, hear me call!
 Hear the voice of Medea!
 It is the call of a friend.
 I implore you, I demand:
 Appear, appear!

(Jason jumps forward from behind the statue.)

Medea (drawing back).

Ha!

Jason.

Accursed sorceress, thy end has come!
 Before thee stands who is to take thy life.

(While rushing forward with extended sword, he wounds Medea in the arm.)

Medea (grasping with her left hand the injured right arm).

Woe's me!

(She drops upon a seat in the rock, groaning and breathing heavily.)

Jason.

Thou flee'st? My arm shall reach thee still.

(Looking about him in the darkness.)

Where is she?

(He takes the lamp and searches by its light.)

There!—Thou shalt escape me not.

(Approaching her.)

Thou wicked one!

Medea (groaning).

Oh!

Jason.

Groan'st thou? Tremble then!

(Letting the light of the lamp fall upon her.)

Deceives me not my sight? Art thou the sorceress

That but a moment since did hoarsely curse?
A maiden see I lying at my feet,
Defended by that grace which conquers all,
And superhuman nothing but her beauty.
Is't thou? Ah, yes! That white arm runs with blood,
Which my unfeeling sword has caused to flow.
What hast thou made me do? Art thou aware
That I came near to killing thee, fair image,
When in night's darkness I attacked thee thus?
And pity 'twere, indeed, to slay such charm!
Who art thou, tell me, thou deceitful being?
Thou seem'st so fair, and art so full of evil,
So well worth loving, yet begetting hate.
How could this mouth, a rose, which like a rose
Was made to breathe the fragrance of sweet words,
With darksome utterance pollute itself?
When Nature planned thee, she wrote gentleness
With pleasing letters on her first fair leaf.
Who set the sorceress' sign upon her pages?
Oh, I beseech thee, leave! I hate thy beauty,
Which will not let me fully hate thy malice.
Thou breathest heavily. Does pain thy arm?
Thou now behold'st the fruits of evil deeds.
The wound is bleeding. Let me see!

(He touches her hand.)

Thou tremblest!

Fast beats thy pulse, convulsed is every fibre.
Perhaps thou art as bad not as thou seem'st,
But tainted merely by thy savage country,
And penitent, and full of pious shame.
Lift up thy eye and look into my own,
That in thy clear gaze I may see revealed
The hidden riddles of thy life and deeds.
Art silent, maiden, thou? O wert thou mute,
And would another mouth less sweet than thine
Had spoke those cursed words that struck my ear!

Thou sighest. Speak! O let me hear thy sounds!
 Entrust them to the air's swift messengers,
 Or else my mouth shall fetch them from thy lips!

The appearance of Absyrtus interrupts the spell which the god-like Jason has thrown over Medea. She stays the hand of her brother, who is about to strike down the stranger. Unknown to herself, love for Jason from now on fills her soul. Her nurse and her attendants find her listless and tearful. Medea confides her adventure to Gora, but insists that it was Heimdar, the god of the deep, who appeared to her in the guise of a young hero. Jason, in an interview with Æetes, tells him the object of his mission. He has been sent by his uncle Pelias, King of Thessaly, to demand the return of the golden fleece. Æetes haughtily refuses, but presses upon Jason a cheering cup, in token of hospitality. Medea presents it to the stranger, but when she recognizes Jason in him, she utters a cry of horror, warning him against the poisoned draught, and thus saving his life for the second time. Medea still professes to share her father's undying hatred of the invaders and their leader. She refuses to admit to the impetuous Jason, who reads the secret of her heart, that she returns his passion. He leads her back to her father.

Jason.

Now, king, prepare thee for the deadly struggle!
 The ties are severed that have held me captive;
 Dispelled forever is the fond delusion
 That lamed each sinew and repressed the deed.
 As back to thee I give her thou embracest,
 So from me cast I peace, and now breathe war.
 Prepare thee, king! At stake are life and fate!

(To Medea.)

And thou, who mute and trembling liest here,
Thy face in hostile anger turned from me,
Farewell! We now must part forevermore.
There was one moment when I vainly thought
That thou couldst feel, that thou couldst more than hate,
When I imagined the eternal gods
Had made us for each other, thee and me;
But that is past, and now farewell, once more.
Twice hast thou saved the stranger's life, Medea.
This I shall cherish, and I thank thee for it.
When in my far-off home, in years to come,
I tell the story to my listening friends,
And they shall ask and urge: For whom the tear
That sparkles strangely in thy manly eye?
Then painful recollection will o'erpower me,
And I shall say: Medea was her name,
And she was beautiful and was majestic,
But in her bosom beat no human heart.

The confession of her love is finally wrung from her when her father, in his fury, attempts to strike Jason down. She entreats Æetes to accept Jason as his son, but merely provokes his curse:

Æetes.

Thou hast deceived me and betrayed.
Never more shalt thou enter my house!
Thou art cast out like the beast in the wilderness,
Shalt die among strangers alone.
Follow him, thy lover, to his home,
Share his bed, his errors, his shame!
Live a stranger among strangers,
Mocked at, despised, and jeered by the crowd!
He for whom thou forsakest father and country,
Himself shall despise thee and mock.
When stilled his desire, when dead is his lust,
Thou shalt stand and wring thy hands,

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And extend them toward thy home,
Separated by the wide and raging sea,
Whose murmuring waves bring thee thy father's curse.

Medea's lot is now inseparably joined to Jason's. He summons his followers for the final stroke and attempts to soothe Medea.

Jason.

Forget what thou hast heard, what thou hast seen,
What thou hast been until this very hour.
Æetes' daughter is now Jason's wife,
Linked to my breast thy duty and thy right.
And as from thee I ruthless tear this veil,
Marked with the symbols of the powers below,
So tear I from thee all the ancient ties
That joined thee to this country's wickedness.
Ye Greeks, here stands a Grecian maiden! Hail her!
(*He tears off her veil.*)

Medea (endeavoring to seize it).

The gods adorned me!

Jason.

Those below. Away!

Thy hair falls freely o'er thy open brow,
And free and open art thou Jason's bride.
But one thing more, and we shall sail from hence:
The fleece thou knowest; tell me where it lies.

Medea.

O speak it not!

Jason.

Why not?

Medea.

Speak not, speak not!

Jason.

Pledged is my word to fetch from hence the fleece.
Without the victor's prize returns not Jason.

Medea.

O hear my voice, speak not of it!
A god in his anger sent the fleece;
Misfortune it brings, it ever has brought.
I am thy wife; thou hast snatched it from me,
Snatched from my breast the reluctant word.
Thine am I, I follow wherever thou wilt,
But not one word more about that fleece!
In the dawning twilight of prescient dreams
The gods have shown it to me,
Spread over corpses,
Spattered with blood,
My blood,
Speak not of it!

Medea implores Jason to desist from the search for the fleece, which must end in certain death, but as he remains unshaken in his determination, she accompanies him to the cave, where, aided by her magic, he eludes the dragon, and carries off the coveted treasure. As the Argonauts are about to embark, Absyrtus, at the head of a force of Colchians, comes to recapture the fleece. Disarmed by Jason, and threatened with capture, he leaps into the sea. Æetes appears in time to witness in his son's death the fulfilment of the curse pronounced by Phrixus. When he attempts to throw himself upon Jason, he staggers back before the avenging fleece. The Argonauts depart as the agonized father falls to the ground.

During the long sail from Colchis to Greece Medea becomes Jason's wife. He curtly relates:

Four years the gods postponed the ship's return,
'Tween sea and land we aimlessly were tossed,
And hourly facing her in narrow confines,

My early shudder parted with its sting.

Done was what happened; she became my wife.

Two children are born to the ill-matched pair. Bitter disappointment awaits them both on their final landing. Instead of being hailed in Greece as the conquering hero, Jason is the object of general aversion because of his wife, the sorceress. He feels himself slighted in her,

Mine was she, me they scorned in scorning her,

but the double insult merely intensifies the estrangement between them. His uncle Pelias commands him to cast off Medea, but his pride rebels against the behest. Pelias dies a cruel death, and Jason, suspected of having murdered him, flees from Iolcos. After wandering, a homeless fugitive, from city to city, he reaches Corinth, whose king, Creon, a friend of his father, he hopes may give shelter to him and his wife. And to Creon he tells the story of his life.

At the opening of the last part of the trilogy, in Corinth, we find Medea resolved to break with the past. She will be Greek with the Greeks, and buries her magic implements, together with the golden fleece. Gora, her nurse and evil genius, who had come with her from Colchis, surprises her as the chest containing the ill-starred treasures is being lowered into the earth, and she heaps upon Medea words of biting sarcasm:

And thus all now is blotted out!

A breath that's gone is the past,

Alone is the present, and there is no future.

There was no Colchis, and there are no gods.

Thy father never lived, nor died thy brother!

Because thou think'st it not, it ne'er has been!

Think then thou art not wretched, think
Thy husband loves thee still, the traitor,
Perhaps 'twill happen!

Gora has even poisoned the minds of the children.
Medea takes them to greet their father:

Boy.

Art, father, thou a Greek?

Jason.

Why dost thou ask?

Boy.

Gora in insult calls thee Greek!

Jason.

In insult?

Boy.

Deceitful folk they are, and cowardly.

Jason (to Medea).

Hear'st thou?

Medea.

'Tis Gora's talk inflames the children.

Forgive them!

(She kneels down before the children and whispers into their ears.)

Jason.

Be it so! There, ill-starred, kneels

Who bears her burden, bears my own as well.

Creon, after hearing Jason's story, is willing to grant protection to him and his children, and gentle Creusa, Creon's daughter, welcomes Jason, her early playmate. Her heart goes out to his children, but she shudders at the first sight of Medea, whose evil fame has preceded her. Creusa, however, soon holds out a pitying hand to her from whom all turn in fear:

Creusa.

I have offended thee, I know, forgive me.

Medea.

O sweetest sound! Who spoke the gentle words?
They often scold and deeply hurt my soul,
But no one ever asked how sore the wound.

Creusa teaches Medea a song that Jason sang as a boy, hoping that it will please him to hear it, but Medea, though willing to learn, describes to Creusa his cold selfishness:

For him and him alone the world was made,
And nothing lives except to prompt his deeds.
To own in thought what may elude his clutch,
He dares his fate and risks the fate of all.
If glory tempts, he kills without a pang,
And if a woman, why, he simply grasps.
Let break what will, he has what he desires;
Right is his deed, for what he wills is right.

Creusa attempts to mediate between Jason and Medea, but he rudely sends Medea away, and in telling Creusa the story of his triumphs and disappointments, he feels his early fondness for her reawaken.

Jason.

My fate is sealed. Crushed am I, ne'er to rise.

Creusa.

I know a way by which thou mayest rise.

Jason.

I know there is, but canst thou show me how?
Show me that ne'er I left my parents' home,
That I remained in Corinth with you all,
That ne'er I saw the fleece, saw Colchis never,
Saw never her whom now I call my wife?
Show me she sought again her cursed land,

And blotted out that once she was in Corinth,
Then shall a man again I be with men.

Creusa.

Is this the only way? I know another:
Let simple be thy heart, content thy mind.

Jason.

O if thou might'st impart these, pure-souled maid!

Creusa.

The gods grant willing what we fondly seek.
Once they were thine; they may be thine again.

Jason.

Dost sometimes thou recall our childhood days?

Creusa.

Oft do I think of them, and love to think.

Jason.

When we were as one heart, a single soul.

Medea returns as Jason recalls to Creusa the happy days when she watched for his coming and going. He resents Medea's intrusion.

Medea.

Jason, I know a song.

Jason (continuing to address Creusa).

And then the tower!

Dost thou remember it, on yonder shore,
Where thou didst weeping with thy father stand,
When I took ship and sailed for far-off lands?
I had no eye then for thy flowing tears,
For full my soul was of my future deeds.
A gust of wind detached thy veil from thee,
The waves received it, and I sprang for it,
And carried it with me, to think of thee.

Creusa.

Hast thou it still?

Jason.

Remember many a year

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Since then has passed; the winds have borne away
Thy pledge. 'Tis gone.

Medea.

Jason, I know a song.

Jason.

Thou then didst call to me: Farewell, my brother!

Creusa.

As now I call: My brother, hail to thee!

Medea.

Jason, I know a song.

Creusa.

She knows a song

That once thou sang'st. Hear! Let her sing it.

Jason.

Yes, yes! What was I saying? 'Tis a habit
That mocking clings to me from childhood's days,
And makes me dream and talk of far-off things
That are not now and nevermore shall be;
For even as the youth lives in the future,
So with the past together lives the man,
And no one in the present fully lives.
A moment back I was a valiant hero,
And had a precious wife and gold and goods,
And mine there was a place where slept my children.

(*To Medea.*)

What didst thou want of me?

Creusa.

Sing thee a song,

Which in thy youth thou sang'st here in our home.

Jason.

That singest thou?

Medea.

As best I may.

Jason.

Indeed!

Wouldst thou, then, with this paltry, childish song

Give back my childhood and its happiness!
No, let it be! We must cling to each other,
Because it happened so, and 'tis our fate;
But let us have no songs and childish things.

Creusa.

O let her sing! She tried so hard to learn,
And now she knows the song and—

Jason.

Well, then sing!

Creusa.

The second string, remember!

Medea (passing her hand over her forehead, with an expression of pain).

O forgotten!

Jason.

Thou see'st, I knew full well it would not do!
To quite another play her hand is used;
The dragon sang to sleep her magic art,
Which had another note than thy pure song.

Creusa (prompting Medea in a whisper).

O ye gods,
Great gods—

Medea (repeating).

O ye gods,
Ye great and just, relentless gods—

(The lyre drops from her hand, and she presses her hands to her eyes.)

Creusa.

She weeps. How can you be so harsh to her and wild?

Jason (restraining Creusa).

Leave her! Thou, child, know'st neither me nor her.
The gods have laid their hands upon Medea;
She feels the touch, yet, blood-stained, digs e'en here.
Do thou not meddle with the gods that judge!
Hadst thou beheld her in the dragon's nest,
Where like the monster's her contortions were,

Her darting tongue shot forth a double venom,
 And hate and death gleamed from her flaming eye,
 Thy bosom were well steeled against her tears.
 Take thou the lyre, and sing to me the song,
 And chase the demon gnawing at my vitals;
 It may be thou canst do it, she cannot.

Medea, stung by Jason's taunts, breaks the lyre and throws the pieces defiantly before Creusa. At this moment the herald of the Amphictyonic Council appears and proclaims the banishment of Jason and Medea from all Greece, for the murder of King Pelias. Creon defends Jason and shields him as one who is to be his son-in-law, but Medea is told to leave Corinth before another morning dawns. The bitterest mutual reproaches between Jason and Medea ensue:

Jason.

Why dost thou rave against me, frightful one,
 Turn to reality my darksome dreams,
 Show me myself reflected in thy mirror,
 And call my thoughts as witnesses against me?
 I nothing know, no, nothing, of thy deeds.
 For hateful from the first were all thy ways,
 I cursed the day when I beheld thee first,
 And pity only kept me at thy side.
 But now for all eternity I leave thee,
 And curse thee, as thou'rt cursed by all the world.

Medea.

O speak not thus, my Jason, husband mine!

Jason.

Away!

Medea.

When threat'ning my old father spoke,
 Didst thou not promise nevermore to leave me?

Jason.

Thyself thy promise thou hast forfeited,
I give thee over to thy father's curse!

Medea.

Thou hateful one! My husband, come!

Jason.

Away!

Medea.

Back to my arms, as was thy own desire!

Jason.

Away, away! See'st thou my sword? It slays thee
If thou dost not retreat.

Medea (approaching him).

Then strike me, strike!

Creusa (to Jason).

O hurt her not! Let her depart in peace!

Medea.

Art thou here, too, thou white and silvery serpent?
O hiss no more, nor tempting move thy tongue.
Thy aim thou hast attained, thou hast my husband!
Was this the object of thy loving ways,
Why thou didst coil around my neck thy rings?
O would I had a dagger, that I might
Thee and thy father, him, that righteous king!—
So therefore didst thou sing thy lovely songs?
Therefore thou gav'st the lyre me and the dress!

(Tearing off her cloak.)

Off! Off! Away ye gifts of infamy!

(To Jason.)

Look! As I tear asunder here this cloak,
And to my aching heart press part of it,
While all the rest I throw before thy feet,
So tear asunder I my love, our ties.
Whatever may ensue I cast before thee,
Who sinned against misfortune's holy brow.
Give me my children, let me then depart!

King.

The children shall remain.

Medea.

Not with their mother?

King.

Not with the sinner!

Medea (to Jason).

Thus thou sayest, too!

Jason.

I, too!

Medea.

Then hear me, children!

King.

Back, I say!

Medea.

You bid me go alone? So be it then!
But hear me now: Before the twilight ends
My children you shall give me. 'Tis enough!
But thou who stand'st dissembling now before me,
And down upon me look'st, thou lying saint,
I tell thee thou shalt wring thy hands despairing,
In envy of Medea's happier lot.

Jason.

Darest thou?

King.

Away!

Medea.

I go, but shall return
And fetch what's mine, and bring what is your due.

King.

Shall she thus threaten to our very face?
If words cannot—

(*To his attendants.*)

Then you shall teach the lesson!

Medea.

Stand back! Who of you dares to touch Medea?

Remember, king, the hour when I departed,
No more unhappy hour hast thou e'er seen.
Make room! I go! My vengeance goes with me!

Gora fans Medea's fury against her treacherous husband. She asks for another interview with him, and is stung to the quick by his studied calmness.

Medea.

Who is the gentle one that speaks to me?
Is it not Jason? And his talk is sweet?
Thou gentle one, didst thou not go to Colchis
And woo, besmirched with blood, the kingly maiden?
Thou gentle one, didst thou not slay my brother?
Not kill my father, gentle one and pious?
Dost thou not leave the wife, the stolen one?
Thou gentle? Thou abandoned, awful wretch!

But while owning all her guilt, caused by her love for him, she makes one more appeal for the sake of her children.

Medea.

My husband! No, thou art no longer that!
My lover! No, that thou hast never been!
Then man! Can'st thou be man, and break thy faith?
Jason! Fie! Treachery spells that name!
How shall I call thee? Wretch! O gentle, kind one!
Give me my children, and let me depart!

Jason at last grants her the cruel privilege of taking one of the children with her into exile, the choice to be made by the children themselves. Creusa brings them in.

Creusa.

The children, so they tell me, have been sent for.
Why were they? And what is to happen now?
O see! They love me, though but just arrived,
As though for years we'd seen and known each other,

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My gentle speech, to which they are unused,
Has won them, as their misery wins me.

King.

One of the two will leave hence with his mother.

Creusa.

And leave us!

King.

Yes, for so the father wills.

(*To Medea who has stood by, lost in thought.*)

The children are now here, let them decide!

Medea.

The children! Ah, my children! Yes 'tis they!
The only thing I still own on this earth.
Ye gods, what ever evil I have thought,
Forget it, and leave both to me, leave both!
Then I shall go and praise aloud your goodness,
Forgive him and—not *her*, no, no, nor *him*!
Come here, my children, here! Why stand you there,
And nestle closely to her hostile breast?
O if you knew what she has done to me,
You would seek weapons for your little hands,
To cruel claws would turn your feeble fingers,
And you would tear the body which you touch.
Dost thou my children tempt? Relax thy grip!

Creusa.

O wretched woman, think'st I hold thy children?

Medea.

Not with thy hand, yet hold'st them, like their father,
With malice in the eye and treachery.

But when Medea implores each child in turn, with all the pitiful eloquence of a mother's anguish, to go with her, and both flee from her to Creusa, her heart has henceforth only room for vengeance. The children's doom, as well as Jason's fate, is sealed. The King, who has accidentally discovered Medea's buried treasures, furnishes himself

the weapons of revenge. She gives him the fleece which he demands, and sends to Creusa as a marriage gift a fiery casket, which is to consume her and the palace. The children are brought to her for a last farewell.

Female Slave (with the children).

My royal master sends your children here,
When past the hour, I am to call for them.

Medea.

In time they shall be for the wedding feast.
And now take her who stands here to thy mistress,
She has a present and a message from me.
And thou mind well what I've commanded thee.
Speak not, it is my will!—Take her with thee.

(Exeunt Gora and the Slave.)

Medea.

Begun the deed is, but not finished yet.
My mind is easy, since my path is clear.

(The children, hand in hand, turn to follow the slave.)

Medea.

Where to?

Boy.

I'm going home.

Medea.

What seek'st thou there?

Boy.

Our father bade us follow yonder slave.

Medea.

Your mother bids you stay. Here you remain!

* * * * *

What harm has ever done ye both your mother
That thus you flee from her and turn to strangers?

Boy.

You want again to take us on thy ship,
Where we get dizzy and the air is close.
We shall remain here. Brother, stay'st thou not?

Little Boy.

Yes.

Medea.

Then thou, Absyrtus, too, wilt go from me?

But it is better thus, better the whole!

Come to me!

Boy.

I'm afraid.

Medea.

Come to me, boy!

Boy.

Will you not hurt me?

Medea.

Hurt? Hast thou deserved it?

Boy.

You once did throw me, for that like my father

I look, but therefore does my father love me.

I stay with him, and with the woman kind.

Medea.

Thou shalt go to her, to that woman kind!

How he resembles him, the traitor, him!

Little boy.

I'm sleepy.

Elder Boy.

Let us go to sleep. 'Tis late.

Medea.

O ye shall both sleep to your hearts' content!

Go there and rest yourselves upon those steps

While I take meanwhile counsel with myself.

How carefully he leads his brother thither,

Takes off his outer dress and wraps it 'round

His little brother's shoulder, to protect him!

And now, their little arms locked in a fond embrace,

They closely nestle.—Bad he never was!

O children, children!

The fatal hour has come. She rouses the children for the last time.

Medea.

Children, hear you not! Arise, arise!

Boy (awaking).

What is it?

Medea (bending down close to the children).

Put your arms around me!

Boy.

I slept so sweetly!

Medea.

Slept? How can ye sleep?

Sleep you because your mother wakes nearby?

No bitterer foe e'er held you in his grasp.

How could you sleep while I was wakeful near?

Go inside, children; there—there may you rest.

When Gora flees from the burning palace, and comes to tell of Creusa's death, Medea hurries away and completes her revenge.

In the last scene of Grillparzer's tragedy, as in Euripides's play, Medea and Jason confront each other once more. But whereas the classic drama ends in bitter mutual reproach, and Medea departs unmoved, predicting evil to Jason, the modern poet provides a nobler climax. The touching conclusion of her apostrophe to Jason reawakens the sympathy of the spectator:

Bear then what has been meted out to thee,
Thy fate shall be what thy deserts demand.
As thou before me liest on the ground,
Thus lay in Colchis I before thee once,
And prayed for mercy. Hadst thou mercy then?
Thy sacrilegious fingers grasped thy lot,

Although I called: "Death is thy touch to thee."
 Take then what sullenly thy heart desired,
 Thy death. But I take final leave of thee;
 It is the last farewell, fore'er the last,
 I bid thee now, my husband. Fare thee well!
 Remembering all the joys of bygone days,
 In all the anguish that enshrouds us both,
 In all the sadness which the future bodes,
 I still say, fare thee well, O husband mine!
 A fate of sorrow darkening looms for thee,
 Yet be prepared to meet thy stern decree,
 In suffering stronger than thou wast in deed.
 And if thy anguish greater than thy strength,
 Let my surpassing woe console thee still,
 For I have done what thou hast merely borne.

Like Sappho's final note of resignation, Medea's last words are:

"Bear, suffer, and atone."

It would scarcely be profitable to trace in this place the relationship between Grillparzer's drama and the Medea of Euripides. Both retain their hold on the reader and spectator by an appeal to the primal emotions which defy age and custom. An American student of Grillparzer, Mr. William Guild Howard, of Harvard University, justly remarks that "it may be doubted whether of the many dramas in European literature treating the fate of Jason and Medea, the first, that of Euripides, is not, next to Grillparzer's, the least antiquated." Leaving aside the multitude of lesser dramatists who have tried to modernize the story of the golden fleece, one is tempted to compare Grillparzer's "Medea" with that of Corneille, a work which, with all its shortcomings, did not deserve the fate

that has overtaken it. The "Medea" of Longepierre, says the learned Corneille editor, M. Marty-Laveaux, first performed in 1694, and kept before the public throughout the eighteenth century, has thrown that of Corneille into complete obscurity. Corneille's "Medea," while it cannot claim to reproduce the atmosphere and the spirit of the Greek play as closely as does Grillparzer's, has supplied the text for hosts of subsequent adapters of the classic legend; Grillparzer himself borrowed from it the figure of Creusa, which he endowed with such charm. There is endless scope for the fancy of the student of comparative literature in the contrast between the characters of Medea and Jason as portrayed by Euripides on the one hand, and Corneille and Grillparzer on the other. The latter, it is true, has softened the character of Jason—as he has, at the close, that of Médée—but his picture remains true to the calculating egotist of the original. His hero has his sentimental moods, but Grillparzer's Jason, through all his vacillations and inconsistencies, could never have indulged in the utterly un-Greek affectation of Corneille's:

"Mon cœur, qui se partage en deux affections,
Se laisse déchirer à mille passions,
Je dois tout à Médée, et je ne puis sans honte
Et d'elle et de ma foi tenir si peu de conte,
Je regrette Médée, et j'adore Créuse."

Corneille followed Seneca's Latin play throughout, and often startles us by strangely gallicized lines, as in the

"Va, bienheureux amant, cajoler ta maîtresse"
(I nunc, superbe, virginum thalamos pete),

while Grillparzer's diction combines with the naïve directness of the original those exquisitely delicate, realistic touches of which he alone, among modern dramatists, has the secret. The trilogy abounds in these. In a few simple lines we have placed before us the contrast between Colchis as seen by Jason and Medea. Jason describes it thus:

The day is night there, and the night is horror,
And darker than the night are those that dwell there,

while Medea longingly exclaims:

O Colchis, land thou where my fathers lived,
They call thee dark, to me thou'rt light itself.

Sometimes a singularly telling effect is produced by the repetition of a phrase with the change of but a single word, as in the description of Medea by Milo, Jason's friend:

A woman fearful with her deep, dark eyes,
and Jason's reply:

A woman glorious with her deep, dark eyes.

The trilogy, in spite of some repetitions, is a noble and consistent whole. Medea herself, as depicted by Grillparzer, is one of the most powerful characters in all literature. "We shall dare place beside her," says Mr. Howard, "only the very greatest tragic characters in the modern European drama—Racine's *Athalie*, Hebbel's *Kriemhild*, or Shakespeare's *Lady Macbeth*."

VII

KÖNIG OTTOKARS GLÜCK UND ENDE

"'MEDEA' is the last of my plays," Grillparzer writes in his autobiography, "that has made its way to the non-Austrian stage of our German fatherland." He finds the spirit of the times set against works of imagination. Spectators, actors and writers seem to him to succumb alike to this indifference. That Grillparzer did not make light of the popular verdict as to "The Golden Fleece" is shown in the following passage:

"I have always placed a high value on the judgment of the public. As regards the conception of his play, the dramatic poet must follow his own idea, but as to whether in its execution he has been true to human nature, as we daily find it, only its representative, the public, can enlighten him. Its right to pronounce judgment is founded not in knowledge of the law, but in its naturalness and freedom from preconceived notions. Of this naturalness, which in northern Germany has been pushed into the background by false culture and slavish imitation, a large remnant is still to be found in Austria, coupled with a receptivity which, if properly guided by the poet, may lead to an almost incredible keenness of judgment. The favorable opinion of such a public proves little, for it wants above all to be entertained, but its displeasure is in

the highest degree instructive. In this case it contented itself with a *succès d'estime*."

The impulse of the artist in search of new themes, heightened by patriotic motive, led the disappointed author into a field where he was destined to achieve some of his most notable triumphs—that of Austrian history. Grillparzer has left a vivid record of the origin of his drama, "König Ottokars Glück und Ende" (King Ottokar's Fortune and End).

"The fate of Napoleon was at that time fresh in everybody's memory. I had read with an avidity that drove almost every other subject from my thoughts all that had been written about that extraordinary man by himself and others. I regretted that the divergent views concerning the principal facts of his life rendered a poetic treatment of them impossible, not only for the time being, but probably for the future. Full of such impressions, I gathered up some of my recollections of other historical subjects, and while thus occupied, I was struck with a certain resemblance, remote, it is true, between Napoleon and the Bohemian King Ottokar II. Both, notwithstanding the great difference between them, men of valor, both conquerors, who, without real malignancy in their composition, were driven by circumstances to harshness, nay tyranny, and both rulers who, after fortune had been true to them for many years, met with a sad end, the turning point in the fate of both being the dissolution of their first marriage, followed by a second. And since the downfall of Ottokar resulted in the foundation of the Hapsburg dynasty in Austria, an Austrian poet could not help finding in that historic episode an invaluable treas-





ure. It was thus not the fate of Napoleon which I wanted to describe in that of Ottokar, although even the slight resemblance between the two excited my enthusiasm. The subject, moreover, was peculiar in that I found in history and legend, ready at hand, nearly all the events needed for my purposes. In order not to be compelled to introduce needless incidents of my own invention I began to devour whatever I could rake together concerning the history of Austria and Bohemia during the period in question."

Grillparzer's natural interest in the past of his fatherland was undoubtedly stimulated by a remark of August Wilhelm Schlegel, in his "Lectures on Dramatic Art and Literature," delivered in Vienna, as to the extraordinary wealth of dramatic themes in the history of Austria. Baron Hormayr, the editor of a periodical called *Austrian Archives*, had raised the question "whether the history of Austria offered less noble subjects for the drama, ballad, legend, the novel and the plastic arts than the history of antiquity or that of the Middle Ages in other countries." Grillparzer hated Schlegel and disliked Hormayr, but, as Ehrhard says, "he carried out in his 'Ottokar' the best part of their programme." The French professor very justly refutes the reproach of his German colleague Volkelt, that Grillparzer in reality cared little for history. Grillparzer, like Schopenhauer, had little patience with the propounders of cut-and-dried systems. "He deplored," says Ehrhard, "the influence of Hegel, whose disciples combined philosophy with history, just as they mixed it with poetry." Grillparzer's lucid intellect was repelled by those historians who dealt largely in abstractions. Ger-

vinus was in his eyes the very worst type of those historical writers who envelop the reader in a cloud of learned phrases, while unable to place before him the picture of an epoch or the portrait of a man. And he thus defines the functions of the poet in search of historical subjects:

"I was on firm historic ground, as regards the tragic drama, long before Ludwig Tieck and his worshippers held forth on that subject in their stupid way. Stupid indeed. For the poet selects historical subjects because he finds in them a germ for his own themes, above all, in order to give to the events and persons of his own choosing a certain consistency and appearance of reality. He endeavors to transplant into the realm of bodily existence what is properly part of dreamland. No one would care for an imaginary hero who by imaginary deeds of valor conquered an imaginary land. And especially is it necessary to have a background of reality if what is described transcends ordinary bounds; for otherwise it will become simply ludicrous. A fictitious Alexander the Great or Napoleon would excite the ridicule of every sensible person. But the question of what is strictly historical, that is to say, what is actually true, not only as to events, but as to motives and development, has nothing to do with the subject itself. Schiller's masterpiece would remain what it is, for all time to come, independently of all historic truth, even if to-day documents were discovered proving either Wallenstein's complete guilt or his innocence. Shakespeare found ready at hand what was then called "history" and used it in his own way. In all his historical plays, what he himself added is the most interesting part of them, as witness the comic personages in 'Henry IV.,'

the inimitable Hotspur, the heartrending scenes in 'King John,' etc. And it must be confessed that had he not written the plays founded on tales and legends, there would be little talk of his historical plays. Indeed, what is history? About the character of what historical person are opinions agreed? The historian knows little, but the poet must know everything."

Judged by this view of the province of the historical drama, the censure of some of Grillparzer's critics becomes purposeless. Indeed, as Dr. O. E. Lessing remarks, "the alleged defects of 'Ottokar' constitute one of its greatest merits. Grillparzer, who shared Schiller's theory of the historical drama, in practice went considerably beyond Schiller. He surpassed the older master in psychological accuracy of characterization and in the use of actual episodes that lend consistence to the dramatic structure. He knows, better than Schiller, how to convince us of the inevitableness of what has happened by the sheer force of the events themselves. Grillparzer's characters do not make history out of the depths of philosophic consciousness, they are alive and are history. Grillparzer's ideas are expressed not in fair words but in deeds."

The period during which Grillparzer wrote "Ottokar" was perhaps the happiest of his life. In the winter of 1820-21 he made the acquaintance of Katharina Fröhlich, with whose name his own is inseparably linked. She was one of four gifted sisters, all endowed with a charm of person and manner which secured them entrance into the best society of Vienna. Katharina, who was ten years younger than Grillparzer, possessed striking beauty. As

a child she attracted the attention of the emperor Francis as she happened to walk through a corridor of the imperial palace. He stopped her, stroked her beautiful hair, and asked her name—an incident commemorated by the poet, as we shall see, in "Ottokar." Grillparzer had first met her elder sisters at musical soirées, where he admired their artistic power and conversational grace, and he found it difficult to choose between the four. But Katharina's natural gayety, goodness of heart, and emotional charm proved irresistible. She was genuineness itself. While not much better educated than the average Viennese girl of those days, she possessed an innate mother wit and soundness of judgment which captivated the poet. He spent blissful evenings at the modest *salon* of the Fröhlichs. Schubert was a frequent guest there. He composed his "Serenade" for Josephine, the most gifted of the sisters, a singer of renown. On such evenings Katharina, seated next to the poet, abandoned herself to dreams of happiness evoked by Schubert's improvisations on the piano. Alas! they were not to be realized.

Meantime Grillparzer's official position had undergone a favorable change. The first use he made of an increase in his salary was to cancel his contract as dramatic poet to the Burgtheater, in order to be free to dispose of his work as he chose. His official duties in the finance department were light enough, the only disagreeable feature being the necessity of reporting to Count Stadion, in the absence of the ministerial secretary, at all hours of the night. Count Stadion often went to bed toward morning and rose at noon. "I had to give him an account," Grillparzer writes, "after midnight, on his return from some social affair, of all sorts

of transactions and official papers—a duty which, half asleep as I was, I did not always discharge with great promptness.” In the summer Grillparzer accompanied the minister to his estates, and he records, with justifiable satisfaction, that Count Stadion “made it plain how pleased he was to be able to introduce to his family, instead of my ignorant predecessor, a poet and a man of parts.”

Grillparzer did not feel at ease in the company in which he found himself. “When there were visits from noble families in the vicinity or from diplomats of the second rank, belonging to the sphere formerly occupied by the count, there was a hubbub and noise to which my nerves did not prove equal. The emptiest and most witless of all were the diplomats, and I often sighed when I subsequently read their names as participants in the political deliberations of bygone days. They entertained the count with coarse and scandalous stories taken from their daily experiences, and it was very evident that they were looking in the very house of their present host for material with which to entertain those whom they were now ridiculing. The count knew all this as well as I did, but he was indifferent to it. He was altogether, as regards strength of character, one of the notable men of his time. He had an almost incredible control over himself. For the demands of society the inanity of court life and of the diplomatic *salons* had been a good preparatory school; but even so it was wonderful how he succeeded in finding always something to amuse or interest him in every contingency that arose. But he demanded the same self-control of every true man, and I am convinced that he took my boyish vacil-

lations very ill, although he never gave a sign of displeasure. Yet it was this very kindness that made a real display of energy on my part impossible."

Two years had elapsed since the manuscript of "Otto-kar" reached the public censor, and there was still no answer concerning its fate. Inquiry of various officials revealed nothing as to its whereabouts. The play apparently had vanished. Finally some one suggested that it might possibly be in the hands of the court councillor Gentz, Metternich's powerful secretary, and Grillparzer called at his house. Gentz, a German publicist of great ability, but utterly without principles, who had sold his pen to Metternich, was precisely the sort of official most repugnant to Grillparzer, who has left on record a vivid picture of his interview with him.

"I well remember how disgusted I was by all I saw in the man's apartments. The floor of the antechamber was covered with padded carpets to such a depth that at every step one sank into them as if into a bog, and experienced a sensation akin to seasickness. On all the tables and bureaus stood covered glass dishes with preserved fruit, ready to gratify the momentary appetite of the sybaritic occupant of the dwelling; in his bedroom he himself lay on a snow-white couch, clad in a dressing-gown of gray silk. He was surrounded by every imaginable contrivance pandering to ease and comfort. There were movable armchairs to bring pen and ink nearer to him, a desk which moved automatically toward and away from him, etc. He received me coldly, but with politeness. He admitted having read my play, but said that he had passed it on. I left him. I went elsewhere, from one place to

another, only to meet with new uncertainties. Finally all trace of the play was lost.

"What my situation was may well be imagined. I could not think of choosing a new subject, for if one so loyally patriotic met with difficulties, what hope of success was there for another? At last, however, help came from a quarter where I had least expected it. The present dowager-empress, at that time reigning empress, was indisposed. The poet Matthäus Collin, one of the teachers of the Duke of Reichstadt, called on her, probably in order to report about the progress of his pupil. The empress, a woman of much education, asked him to suggest some interesting books to her. He mentioned a few, which she had already read. Finally she said: 'Why don't you go to the office of the imperial theatre, and ask whether there is not on hand some interesting manuscript play? I should witness its performance with all the greater interest after having read it.' Collin went to the office, but learned that there were on hand only a few insignificant one-act comedies, whose value lay solely in the opportunity they gave to skilful performers. 'König Ottokars Glück und Ende,' he was told, was a play that might be of interest to her majesty, but that had for two years been in the hands of the censor, and all efforts to recover it had proved fruitless. Collin went straight to the bureau of the censor, and when he told the nature of his errand, the manuscript was at once found.

"Collin read the play to the empress, who could not sufficiently express her astonishment that there should have been any idea of prohibiting it. While it was being read aloud to her the emperor entered her apartment. The em-

press told him what she thought about the play, and that she had found in it nothing but what was good and praiseworthy. 'If that is so,' said the emperor, 'let Collin go to the censor and tell him to give his permission for the performance of the play.' Collin, a man of the highest sense of honor, has never made a secret of this occurrence, and thus I have heard of it. It was thus by the merest accident that a work which, not to speak of anything else, had cost me more than a year's labor in collecting the material, did not vanish from the earth."

A few years after the performance of "Ottokar" Grillparzer had an amusing encounter with a court councillor connected with the censor's bureau, which threw light on the mysterious disappearance of his play as well as on the workings of that institution. The official, whom the poet met accidentally in a stage-coach, began the conversation with the stereotyped question why Grillparzer wrote so little. "I answered, that he, as an official censor, ought to be in a sufficiently good position to know the reason. 'Yes,' was his reply, 'that is the way with you literary men. You always imagine the censor engaged in a conspiracy against you. When your "Ottokar" was held up for two years you probably believed that a bitter enemy of yours prevented its performance. Do you know who kept it back? I myself, and the Lord knows I am no enemy of yours.' 'But, my dear court councillor,' I answered, 'what was there in the play that seemed so dangerous to you?' 'Nothing at all,' said he, 'but I thought: After all, one can't be sure'—and this the man said in a tone of the utmost friendliness, showing that the official in charge of literary matters had not the faintest concep-

tion of literary property rights. It never entered his mind that the work of a poet might have as good a claim to appreciation and compensation as that of an official or an artisan."

"König Ottokars Glück und Ende" was performed at the Burgtheater on the 19th of February, 1825.

Grillparzer followed in his drama substantially the account of Ottokar's career as given in the "Rhymed Chronicle of Austria," written in 1306-20. A summary is of interest as throwing light on the use which the poet made of his material.

During the troubles following the extinction of the Babenberg dynasty, Ottokar of Bohemia invades Austria and takes up his residence at Vienna. He marries Margaret, sister of Duke Frederick, the last of the Babenbergs. She was the widow of King Henry, who had ceded to her his rights to Austria and Styria. King Bela of Hungary disputes Ottokar's title to Styria, and is vanquished by the Bohemian king in the battle of Marchegg. Having become the most powerful of German princes, Ottokar divorces Margaret, in order to marry Kunigunde, Bela's granddaughter. He carries on a victorious campaign in the North against the pagan Prussians, while in the South he joins Carinthia and Carniola to the states under his sceptre. Uniform success renders him tyrannical. He throws into prison a number of Styrian noblemen falsely accused of having conspired against him, and subjects one of them, Siegfried von Merenberg, to cruel torture. He is suspended by his feet, with his head down, and the jailer breaks his skull. Ottokar aspires now to the dignity of emperor of Germany, and enters into in-

trigues to obtain the votes of the electors assembled at Frankfort. But Rudolph of Hapsburg is chosen instead, and is crowned at Aix-la-Chapelle. As prince of the empire, Ottokar is summoned to Nuremberg, to render homage to the new emperor. He refuses to go, nor does he heed a second summons to Augsburg. Rudolph thereupon despatches the burgrave of Nuremberg to demand of him the restoration of the provinces of Austria and Styria, to which he has no title after having repudiated Margaret. The nobles of Austria and Styria, tired of Ottokar's tyranny, rally around the emperor. Ottokar attempts to check their defection and seizes some as hostages. Rudolph descends the Danube, everywhere hailed with joy. Austrians and Styrians join him in the siege of Vienna. Its burgomaster, Paltram, a partisan of Ottokar, is forced by the inhabitants to surrender the town to Rudolph. Ottokar is furious at the news. His chancellor, Bishop Braun of Olmütz, seeks to bring about a reconciliation between the two monarchs, and Ottokar finally listens to his advice. He goes to Vienna, and, kneeling before Rudolph, is invested by him with the crowns of Bohemia and Moravia, after he has renounced his claim to the provinces brought to him by Margaret in marriage. On his return to Prague, Queen Kunigunde loads him with reproaches for having thus humbled himself before his rival. Stung by her insults, he swears to retrieve himself in her eyes, and tears the treaty of peace concluded with Rudolph. His courtiers vainly attempt to dissuade him from his purpose, although he recognizes that in declaring war against Rudolph he decrees his own ruin. He meets the imperial army on the banks of the river March. Rudolph's soldiers

prepare for battle by prayer and by receiving the communion. Ottokar is abandoned during the fight by a portion of his troops, incited by their commander, Milota, who thus avenges his brother, who had fallen a victim to Ottokar's malice. Ottokar, defeated and wounded, implores Rudolph's mercy, but is killed by a nephew of Siegfried von Merenberg. His body is stripped by soldiers; a knight charitably covers it with a cloak. No one deploras his death, least of all his wife, who marries Zawisch, a Bohemian noble, her paramour. Thus far the "Rhymed Chronicle," as summarized by Ehrhard.

The life of the Bohemian king had formed the theme of two tragedies before Grillparzer's drama. Lope de Vega's play, "*La imperial de Otón*," was possibly unknown to him; at all events, he borrowed nothing from the rather fantastic Spanish work. Kotzebue's "*Rudolph von Habsburg und König Ottokar von Böhmen*," which appeared in 1815, was a prosy and insipid string of historical episodes. Grillparzer deviated in some essentials from the traditions of Ottokar's life as set forth in the "Chronicle." Ottokar's desire for an heir, which Margaret cannot gratify, merely cloaks his passion for the youthful charmer, Kunigunde of Hungary. He had previously enticed away Bertha, a young noblewoman, from Seyfried von Merenberg, whom he makes the son of Siegfried, who figures in the "Chronicle." His desertion of Bertha had arrayed against him the hostility of the three Rosenbergs, powerful and unscrupulous Bohemian nobles—Benesch, the father, Milota, the uncle, and Zawisch, the cousin, of Bertha. Zawisch, impelled mainly by desire to wreak vengeance upon the king, seeks to gain the affection of the queen.

Ottokar's treatment of Margaret alienates from him the nobles of Austria and Styria. The indignities heaped upon them open the eyes of the delegates who have come to offer him the imperial crown. His overweening pride in ostensibly disdaining the title of emperor prepares the way for his final downfall.

Grillparzer presents in various ways the character of Ottokar in a less sombre light than does the "Chronicle." He is there depicted as having rid himself of Margaret by poison, just as he had caused the barbarous death of the elder Merenberg. In the play Ottokar is troubled by remorse for having thrown Merenberg into prison. He retains to the last the attachment of devoted followers. Whatever his faults, hypocrisy and intrigue are foreign to his character.

In more than one passage Grillparzer emphasises the resemblance of Ottokar to Napoleon, although, in Ehrhard's words, "his theme, a downfall due to pride and tyranny, forbade his investing Ottokar with the grandeur of a man whose eye had fascinated him when he saw him standing on the flight of steps in front of the castle of Schönbrunn." As so often in his writings, so also in this drama, Grillparzer dwells on the need of looking in ^{to} one's own heart for earthly peace and happiness. Napoleon was far from supplying a suitable illustration for such a text. In some detached prose reflections, as in two poems devoted to the fallen conqueror, Grillparzer has left on record his real estimate of Napoleon's character: "What was it that urged him on to his gigantic enterprises? Was it a desire for the happiness of France, of the world at large? He probably never dreamed of either. Did he wish to descend to

posterity? He surely never believed so firmly in the immortality of the soul that the immortality of his fame could have been a powerful motive in his actions. What was it then? The desire of his unceasingly active spirit for ever new and ever stronger excitement. He lacked the capacity for enjoyment. He was impelled to ceaseless action, else he would have been consumed by his internal fire.

In contrast with Ottokar's vaulting ambition, Grillparzer represented in Rudolph a man of clearly defined perception of duty, sure of himself, though not of the decrees of fate. The poet has been blamed for his undue glorification of the Hapsburgs in his portrayal of Rudolph, and for retaining in the drama all the religious fervor with which the chronicles had endowed the emperor. As for the former charge, Grillparzer, in spite of all the bitterness of his resentment against Metternich, the bureaucracy, and the priesthood, never concealed his loyalty toward the dynasty; while Rudolph's piety seemed to him entitled to as legitimate a place in drama as had been accorded to it in Schiller's ballad "Der Graf von Habsburg." In both cases the artistic and realistic triumph achieved was its own justification.

The touching figure of Margaret, whose fate resembles that of Queen Katharine in "Henry VIII.," is endowed with the delicate feminine traits Grillparzer knew so well how to portray. Her conception of wifely duty, after she has ceased to be a wife, and the faithlessness of Kunigunde are contrasted with admirable skill. Perfidious Zawisch, who talks little and does so much, exercises a singular fascination over the spectator. In the hands of an accomplished actor, the rôle is one of the most effective imagi-

nable. Grillparzer had a rather low opinion of histrionic art, but few dramatists have so greatly relied on the actor to supplement and complete their conceptions. There is a wealth of suggestion in Zawisch's ejaculations and innuendos. The poet, in his talks with Foglar ("Grillparzers Ansichten über Litteratur, Bühne und Leben"), gave a hint of that rare mastery of dramatic technique which went to the elaboration of his characters. "A young dramatic author," he said, "ought to transport himself in thought to the pit, and see whether the person on the stage keeps to the right or left, whether he raises this or that hand, whether he stands or sits; he ought, as it were, to see every button on his coat." With the same sure instinct for dramatic effect, which at bottom had its root in an artistic conscientiousness very rare in dramatic literature, Grillparzer knows how to adapt his language to the character represented. Unlike most other dramatic personages, Grillparzer's heroes and heroines speak as befits their individuality.

As if to demonstrate his final emancipation from the influence of the "fate dramatists," Grillparzer emphasizes in his "Ottokar" the power of the individual to carve out his own destiny. Accident has no place in his drama. "It is not an accident," says Ehrhard, "such as a sudden gust of wind, that uncovers the tent in which Ottokar bends his knee to Rudolph; it is the traitor Zawisch who, to revenge himself, cuts the cord. It is not the hazard of war that defeats Ottokar at Dürnkrut; his ruin is the work of Milota, who deserts him. Finally it is not the hand of a stranger that inflicts the mortal blow upon the vanquished king; he perishes by the stroke of Seyfried

von Merenberg, the young knight from whom he had taken first his bride and then his father."

Throughout the play there runs a characteristic note of depreciation of Slavs and Hungarians. Numerous passages in Grillparzer's political essays and reflections testify to a certain antipathy toward these races which even his own protestations to the contrary cannot wholly gainsay. King Bela of Hungary is placed in a most unfavorable light; there is not a redeeming feature in Kuni-gunde; King Ottokar arraigns the indolence of the Czechs in the most scathing terms, while Ottokar von Horneck, the supposed author of the *Chronicles*," is expressly introduced into the play to extol, in a famous passage, the beauty of the Austrian provinces and the virtues of their inhabitants. The poet's innermost sympathies are revealed in this contrast.

His personal feelings have left other imprints on his work. Just as, by introducing Katharina Fröhlich, he has immortalized the one person nearest to his heart, so he recalls one of the saddest episodes of his youth in his allusion to the wonder-working spring near Stip, "a solitude to die in, not to live," where, as has been related, Grillparzer nearly died from the cruel neglect of the noble family who employed him as tutor.

The animated scenes with which the play opens bring out in full relief Ottokar's wrongdoing toward Margaret, as revealed in the contrasting views of the manly Merenbergs and the scheming Rosenbergs.

(Seyfried von Merenberg, partisan in hand, guards the entrance to the royal castle at Prague. Elizabeth and another attendant enter from the queen's apartment.)

Elizabeth.

Haste, Barbara! Fetch Master Niklas, haste!
Though well the queen seems, I am not at rest.

(Enter a servant.)

Hast thou the healing draught? I'm glad 'tis here.
O direful day! O miserable queen!

Merenberg.

(Enter old Merenberg.)

How fares the queen?

Elizabeth.

Her state seems marvellous!

But clear it is she struggles to be calm.

Merenberg.

Who is with her?

Elizabeth.

The count of Hapsburg, sir,

O that I've lived to see it all!

Merenberg.

My son!

*Seyfried (who has stood, lost in thought, leaning on his
partisan).*

You, father?

Merenberg.

Have you heard the news?

Seyfried.

I have.

Merenberg.

You say, then—

Seyfried.

That I don't believe it.

Merenberg.

What?

Seyfried.

No, father! And the talk so frenzies me
That could I but get at the lying brood,
Here with this halberd smote I one and all.

Merenberg (drawing back).

Alas! my son, smite not your father then,
For I believe it, too.

Seyfried.

You, too!

Merenberg.

I know, my son.

Seyfried.

What say you? Such a man, a knight, a king,
Unmindful of his solemn pledge and troth,
Forsake the woman joined to him for aye?
Have I not served him from my boyhood up,
And was he not my model and exemplar
In all good deeds?

Merenberg.

No man becomes depraved

Who, ere he fell, was not accounted good.

Seyfried.

And if myself fair deed I wrought and thought,
To him and to his worth I traced it all,
Oft deeply humbled by his nobler strength.
One single grievance lately nursed my heart:
I durst not join him in the Magyar fray—
Mayhap a rest of ancient love survives
For Bertha still, the maid of Rosenberg—
O could I but exterminate from his life
This only blot, all else were pure and fair!
Believe me if he sins, the deed is theirs,
Fie, Rosenberg! A father sell his daughter!

Merenberg.

Think as you will, but know this much is true,
The queen must leave, she and her retinue,
The worst awaits them, yea, the very worst.
I shall to-day seek Merenberg, my home,
My ancestral retreat. You, too, must hence.

Seyfried.

I, father?

Merenberg.

You. Your childish confidence
Must not misguide you to the yawning gulf.

Pretend to follow me. You'll find at Bruck
 A trusty servant, with two eager steeds,
 And while the world believes you safe with me,
 You haste to Germany by lonely paths.
 The queen declines to lay her hapless fate
 Before the realm; God helping, then shall I.
 I shall not see the daughter of my lord
 Outcast from land and home, and shelterless.
 You go to Frankfort. Hand this letter here
(He opens his doublet, in which the letter is concealed.)
 To the Archbishop of Mainz— But, I hear steps,
 We are observed.

(He turns to go.)

Be silent and make haste!

One day too much is thirty years too few.

(Enter Benesch von Dieditz and Milota.)

Benesch.

Was not Herr Zawisch here?

Seyfried (turning away).

I saw him not.

Benesch.

Yet on his horse I saw him here.

Milota.

Peace, brother!

Benesch.

Aye, peace, indeed! And let the king but dare!
 Is Rosenberg my name not? Is our house
 Most powerful no more of all the nobles?
 And he shall dare such insult? Idle talk!
 But I must know whose brain evolved the tale,
 My hand shall strike him, thus, and thus, and thus,
 Unto the fourth of kin.

(Enter Bertha von Dieditz.)

You, foolish child!

What seek you here? Avaunt, into your chamber!

Bertha.

I cannot stay, by restless fear pursued.
They hurry through the castle and they whisper
Of horrid happenings with averted gaze.
Pray, tell me, is it true?

Benesch.

You ask your father?

Be hence! Away!

Bertha.

O Lord! Is there no soul—

(Approaching Seyfried, but suddenly drawing back.)

You, Merenberg, whom most I ought to shun,
Above all, you, and yet, you have a heart!
I wronged you sorely, Merenberg, but pray,
Not now seek vengeance. Now you see me kneel—
(She kneels before him.)

Can it be true?

Seyfried.

What, Bertha?

Bertha.

Is it true?

Dissolved the wedlock of the king, dissolved?

Seyfried.

So says my father.

Bertha.

And thus say they all.

And to be married!—O belated shame,
Too late thou comest! Who speaks now of shame?—
Once more to marry—

Seyfried (compassionately).

Not a Rosenberg,

Not Bertha!

(She presses her face to the floor, with an exclamation of anguish.)

Benesch (to Seyfried).

Who has told you? Come to me!

Milota (approaching Bertha).

Niece, leave this room, this is no place for you!

Bertha.

O Seyfried, help!

Seyfried.

Milota, with your leave,

If you but dare to lay your hand on her,

This spear, by God, I thrust into your heart.

(Lowers his partisan.)

Benesch.

And if myself—

Seyfried.

No matter who the man.

Benesch.

Dare you withhold the daughter from the father?

Seyfried.

O had you but withheld her in the past,

She should not be as now she stands before us,

Her groans o'ermastering our very hearts.

Benesch.

Perhaps she best had wedded been to you?

Seyfried.

Far better, sir, than wed to shame like this.

Benesch.

My child!

Seyfried.

No further! She is mine in trust,

Which, bound in honor, I know how to guard.

Benesch. Then let my sword—

Seyfried.

Enough! And fear nought at my hands.

(Zawisch enters and bursts into a fit of laughter.)

Ha, ha, ha, ha!

Benesch (who turns suddenly at his approach).

O is it you? Thank God!



Zawisch.

Why struggle thus, ye huntsmen, bold and furious,
To seize the bearskin ere the bear is slain?
Behold friend bruin trudge o'er mount and vale,
In full possession of his paws and claws.
Fair cousin, my regards!

(*To Seyfried.*)

And you, my huntsman,
Smoothe out your ruffled feathers, look less stern,
I am not proper game for you.

Benesch.

Tell us—

Milota.

Yes, nephew, speak!

Zawisch.

Tell you? And what?

Benesch.

The king

Zawisch.

Has taught the Magyars a useful lesson
At Kroissenbrunn.

(*Turning to Milota.*)

You, uncle, shared the sport.

Benesch.

Why talk about that?

Zawisch.

Peace has been proclaimed.

In Austria—

Benesch.

Not that!

Zawisch.

In Styria—

Benesch.

Mock you my words?

Zawisch.

Well, what is your desire?

Benesch.

The union of the king—

Zawisch.

Ah, that has been dissolved.

Benesch.

The document all written out?

Zawisch.

And sealed.

The queen for Vienna is to leave to-day,

And thence—

Benesch.

There is no talk, then?—Cursed the luck!—

With whom—

(Turning to Bertha.)

Be still at last!—With whom the king—

Zawisch.

Ah! whom he now takes for his second spouse?

Whom else, think you, than yonder maid, your child?

O you have shuffled skilfully your cards!

At first the maid by accident was shown,

In splendor decked, such as is rarely seen;

Then her own lack of native wit supplied

Your nimble tongue. Ah, how her wisdom flowed!

The queen of Sheba scarce could better her.

At last—but how can I know all your tricks?

In short, the king is captured, and beware,

Before the hour is o'er, he comes to woo.

Bertha (jumps up).

Away, away, to clasp her feet, and die!

(Rushes into the queen's chamber.)

Zawisch.

Ha, ha, ha!

Merenberg.

Herr Zawisch!

Zawisch.

O a merry feast!

A jolly dance ours to his marriage bells!

(To Seyfried.)

And you, methinks, have wooed her, too, before.

By God! When once in heightened mood with wine,

I liked myself her milk-and-apple cheeks.

Your hand I beg in token of alliance.

(Seyfried turns away.)

Milota.

A truce to folly! Give us sober speech!

Who is to be the king's affianced spouse?

Zawisch.

Curt is your question, curt my answer be:

'Tis Kunigunde of Massovia,

Niece to the Magyar king.

Benesch.

The plague upon her!

Zawisch.

'Twas your desire to see the king divorced,

For many years you labored to this end.

Free is he now—and wooing Bela's niece.

Benesch (pressing his hand to his brow).

Betrayed and foully cheated! Infamy!

Zawisch.

You knock in vain now at the gate of thought,

What erst was closed shall never open now.

Benesch.

You ridicule what you yourself approved!

Zawisch.

Approved? What nonsense! I? What rampant folly!

Benesch.

Yea, you, yes, you!

Milota.

Because you claimed to know.

Benesch.

Bring me my daughter, bring her here to me!

She shall not live! Not she, nor I. Oh, oh!

Seyfried.

Do you revile her? Fie upon yourself!
 Who gave you warrant that it was your child
 For whom the king's, her own king's, hand was meant?

Zawisch.

Ah, there is unsuspected sense indeed!
 A Merenberg were mad to think such thought;
 But we, who trace our birth to royal Rome,
 Heirs to patricians, conquerors of the globe,
 Once, as Ursini, nearest to the throne
 Where Peter's might o'ertops all worldly power—
 We may impunely grasp at princely crowns,
 A Rosenberg may boldly and by right
 In marriage join the highest of this earth,
 And even—ha, ha, ha!

Milota.

Cursed be his laughter!

Zawisch.

The daughter mad, the father tears his hair,
 And we boast of our old nobility!
 And were it older than the angels' fall,
 The king but nods, it crashes to the ground.

Benesch.

But ere I fall, revenge!

(*Seizing Milota.*)

Brother, revenge!

Milota.

I've gathered thought, and am resolved to act.

Zawisch.

Do you bestir yourself, slow-moving Milota?
 Then let the trembling king beware indeed!

Benesch.

If you—if you forsake our common cause,
 You are no Rosenberg; a scoundrel, you!

Milota.

Thus is it,

Zawisch.

Well! How then are we to act?
Let's see. Perhaps when next the king leaves church
You jostle him and step upon his toe,
That sorely hurts, and you are then avenged.

Benesch.

He mocks us! Lord! He is no Rosenberg!

Milota.

Come, brother, let us go! He who can jest
When sullied is the honor of his house
Deserves—

Zawisch.

Stop, friend! Pray tell me, who are you,
You both, who rend the air with empty cries?
Deaf walls you shout to and to open ears,
Conspire in highways, thirst indoors for blood!
Herr Merenberg, are they not valorous men?
With fury drunk, they are like other drunkards.
There is no remedy for such like air.
Away into the open, honored sirs!
Our house and home aflame, shall we stand by
In idleness, and not at least get warm?
The king my ruler is—enough for me.

Milota (approaching him).

I fain believe your speech squares not your thought.
Do you make game of us?

Zawisch (loud).

Of worthy men like you!

My silent thoughts you never can divine,
And if you could, you could not silent be.
The queen's apartment opens, there she comes,
And her grand-almoner, Rudolph, Count Hapsburg.
Let us not trespass on their meditations.

In the following scene Margaret relates to Rudolph of Hapsburg the story of her woes, of how the Rosenbergs

poisoned the king's mind, and nourished his passion for Bertha, in the hope that she would finally occupy the throne of Bohemia—she who is now the insane victim of their wiles. As for herself, she entered into her marriage with Ottokar without love, and she leaves him without sorrow, because without a stain on her honor. When Bohemia's delegates had implored her to marry Ottokar as the only means of putting an end to devastating war between that country and Austria, such was her reply:

I answered "No"! remembering my husband,
 Who took my plighted faith into his tomb;
 But out upon the balcony they led me,
 And pointed to the land by war laid waste,
 To meadows charred, to empty homes, and corpses.
 By women, children, wounded, bleeding, groaning,
 I, horror-stricken, found myself surrounded,
 Implored to save them, I who had the power.
 Then had I but one thought, and promised all.
 And there they brought to me young Ottokar,
 And said he was to be my future husband.
 Dark looked his eye on me, by dark brows fringed,
 As he stood shyly distant, lost in thought,
 Fixed on my aging form his youthful gaze.
 But thinking only of my country's woes,
 I went to him and spoke in friendly tones.
 Thus I became his wife. I never bore him love,
 Nor thought if I might later learn to love;
 But gave him quiet care, and tending him,
 In time a feeling stole into my heart
 That knows full well the anguish of true love,
 But not love's happiness. And thus we lived.
 Judge now if separation frights my soul.
 Yes, I shall go, but wedded I remain,
 Nought have I done to break the marriage tie,

Martial pomp and splendor mark the entrance of King Ottokar upon the scene. He receives the ambassadors of the Khan of Tartary, who have come to offer an alliance, but are dismissed with contempt. He then turns to the delegates of the city of Prague, whom he thus addresses :

Ottokar.

Who are you?

Burgomaster.

Councillor and Burgomaster,

Sir, of your most devoted town of Prague.

Ottokar.

And your desire? Ah!—Tell your tale, ye men!

I am fatigued, let them ungird my armor!

(He throws himself into an armchair; two servants hasten to obey his command.)

Burgomaster.

O mighty king! All-powerful conqueror!

Your victory's fame has overspread our land

And—

Ottokar.

Füllenstein!

Füllenstein.

My lord, at your command!

Ottokar.

What was the place of the Hungarian's rout?

Füllenstein.

Near Kroissenbrunn.

Ottokar.

Fool! There were we encamped.

Think you that I forgot whence I set out?

I mean where last my horsemen made the charge

That sealed the day.

Füllenstein.

It was Marchegg, my lord,

So called because the March there sharply turns,

Ottokar.

Marchegg, thus let the town be also named
Which there in memory of the day shall rise.
Marchegg be mark and token of my luck,
Which thence shall spread. Who is to stay my hand?
The distant future loudly shall proclaim
The glorious day and my victorious name.

(He rises and turns to the servant.)

Why do you stay? Ah, to ungird my limb?

(He sits down again.)

Herr Burgomaster, seize my hose of mail!
Not thus! Avaunt! Why slowly tug away?

(He violently pulls off the greave and throws it into the middle of the room.)

Just where the river March begins to curve,
Throned high King Bela on the further hill,
And Heinrich Preussel near him, in full sight,
Who showed him, as in puppet-play do boys,
The battlefield and what took place around;
The combatants he named of most repute.
A pretty pastime, till the Hapsburg came,
His cavalry descending with fell swoop,
And wildly fled who could in Magyar swear,
Into the river, where their flowing beards
Like sedgy grass swayed in the tide below.
Where is Count Hapsburg? By the gods of war,
Well stood his ground he! Most demure of mien,
But in attack a very devil he.
Where is Count Hapsburg?

Servant.

Shall we call the count?

Ottokar.

No! When the Magyar king perceived his plight,
No need he had of an interpreter.
His hair he wildly clutched with both his hands,
And plucked. Methought an idle task,

Which we set out far better to perform.
Still, he is now our friend and our ally,
Of whom in kindness only we must speak.
But have you done at last?

(He rises.)

My cloak and hat!
And what be new with you, Herr Burgomaster?
You stand as if in dream. Ill fits my hat.

(To the servant.)

The devil take it! Fetch another hat!
The castle wall, I hear you say, is finished?

Burgomaster.

Yes, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

The Moldau bridge, then, too?

Burgomaster.

But yesterday the final stone was laid.

Ottokar.

I see, you knew that I would come to-day.
Was cleared the suburb for the German troops
Sent there, the Saxons and Bavarians?

Burgomaster.

I humbly beg—

Ottokar.

Has it been done?

Burgomaster.

Your highness—

Ottokar.

Yes!

Burgomaster.

Not yet.

Ottokar.

Why? Not yet? God! Why not yet?

Burgomaster.

Once more we crave to plead with you, our lord,
Ere we dislodge so many faithful subjects—

Ottokar.

Dislodge! Who says dislodge! Was this my wish?
 To Chrudim let them go, where triple land
 And space to build on they will find assigned,
 And threefold all the cost of their removal;
 There should they go, and must. They must, I say!
 Well know I your desires, ye old Bohemians!
 To dwell at ease 'mid heaps of ancient rubbish,
 The dark inheritance of darker times;
 Content to eat up yesterday's scant earnings,
 And sow enough just for to-morrow's crop.
 On Sunday feasts, at Kirmess clownish dances,
 But deaf and blind to all the world beside—
 Such is your happiness, but not such mine.
 For as one grasps the drowning by the hair,
 So I will clutch you at your tender spot:
 The German I shall drop among you lollards,
 Who'll pinch your drowsy flesh till you awake,
 And scream with pain, and kick as does the horse
 When spurred to action. You still dream of days
 When sat around the hearth your gentle princes,
 Whose 'scutcheon bore a kettle, emblem fit!
 Not such am I, by God, not I!

(The servants throw the cloak around him.)

Look here!

In Augsburg purchased was this cloak of mine,
 Embroidered rich in velvet and in gold.
 Can you, in your Bohemia, fashion this?
 You shall, by God, you shall, and I will teach you!
 With Vienna, London, Paris, and Cologne,
 Your Prague shall rank, a proud and equal town!
 The countries all, which erstwhile scorned your land,
 My sword has humbled. The proud Magyar flees,
 Bavaria's prince has learned to hold his peace,
 And Austria, brave Styria, Portenau,
 Carniola, too, and old imperial Eger,

I have united all unto my realm.
 Bohemia's name to distant bounds I've carried,
 From distant lands returns Bohemia's fame.
 I, too, might sleep in peace, as slept my forbears,
 Might let *you* sleep, as once your fathers slept.
 For whom performed I what I did? For you!
 But you must follow, on my word, you shall!
 I placed you on a height where looms the world,
 Climb on, or fall, and break your necks to boot!
(*Turning away.*)
 Prepare the suburb for the German troops!

(Enter the chancellor, who approaches the king.)

Ottokar.

What is't?

Chancellor.

The queen, as you commanded, sir,—

Ottokar (again addressing the citizens of Prague).

This, too, you see, for your sake I have done.
 What dearest is to every man, his home,
 His peace, I have disturbed for yours,
 And for your children's peace; that when I die
 My kingdom may not lack a rightful heir,
 Nor civil strife undo what I have done.
 Therefore have I divorced Queen Margaret,
 Who nourishes no hope of child and heir,
 And other ties have I resolved upon.

(Turning to the entire assemblage.)

Yes, yes, ye lords, may ye then know it, all.
 To firmly seal the now accomplished peace
 King Bela Kunigunde offers me,
 His grandchild and Massovia's only daughter.
 Therefore, since long have raised the bishops of the realm
 Their voice in protest 'gainst Queen Margaret—
 And there are reasons why she has displeased—

For, first, she's aged, and there is no issue,
 Nor is there prospect of a future heir;
 And, then, she is my kin—near kin or not,
 No matter which, nor care I, finally—
 But why enumerate cause one, two, three?
 For firstly, second, third, it is my will!
 The queen will come and give her signature,
 Affirm anew the dower of her lands,
 And you as witnesses are here assembled.

(He takes his seat on the throne.)

The scenes which follow are crowded with stirring incident and rapid characterization—the whole a masterpiece of dramatic exposition. Queen Margaret, accompanied by her champions, the knights of Hapsburg and Merenberg, is put by the chancellor through the formality of a trial, whose result is a foregone conclusion. Ottokar welcomes the appearance of the estates of Austria, Styria, and Carinthia, who come to do him homage. Margaret, while bowing to the decree of separation, warns Ottokar not to put his trust in the loyalty of provinces attached to him only through his marriage compact with her. King Bela and Kunigunde come to heighten his triumph. The delegates of the Diet of the Holy Roman Empire ask Ottokar whether he would accept the crown in case it were offered to him. By mistake one of the delegates raises aloft the banner of the Count of Hapsburg instead of that of Bohemia. Rudolph claims his own, but is imperiously ordered by Ottokar to keep silent. King Bela introduces Kunigunde, who is disguised as a warrior, as one of his grandsons, anxious to serve under Ottokar. She throws aside her cloak and stands revealed a beautiful woman. Zawisch, near her, exclaims: "Thou beautiful warrior!"

and is rebuked by Kunigunde. Queen Margaret returns with the documents asked for by the king, but he refuses to see her. Merenberg offers to lead her away, but is commanded by the king to keep his place. Rudolph of Hapsburg then offers her his arm. His chivalry attracts the attention of the delegates of the Holy Roman Empire, among them the chancellor of the archbishop of Mainz, who recognizes in him the chivalrous knight who once gave a priest, bent on an errand of mercy, his own horse with which to cross a swollen stream. The archbishop was himself that priest, and he now asks, in the name of the empire, safe conduct for the queen. He and Rudolph lead her away. Ottokar threatens the departing delegate with his wrath. The spokesman of the delegates presses for a definite answer to the question whether he would accept the crown if offered.

Zawisch (stepping forward).

Will you deprive us of our king and master?

Is he not powerful? He needs you not.

A very god he rules upon this earth.

The empire breeds but care and little profit.

Leave him, and give your precious gifts to Germans!

Your offer shows your need. Leave us our master!

Ottokar.

In part he speaks the truth, sir delegate.

Much need of change is patent in the empire,

Great need to break and punish sullen pride;

Well see I that your master was your servant.

King am I of Bohemia and rich;

God keep me from a beggared emperor's fate!

Yet, wait and see if later I be pleased

To answer your petition favorably.

(Turning to Kunigunde)

Now am I yours, with soul and body yours.

Zawisch.

Long life to Ottokar!

(Sound of trumpets. General acclaim.)

King of Bohemia!

Of Austria Duke!

Of Styria, and Carinthia!

Of Carniola!

Holy Roman Emperor! Ottokar!

At the opening of the second act Zawisch ridicules alike Ottokar's pretensions to the emperor's crown and Kunigunde's pride. Milota von Rosenberg has captured Seyfried von Merenberg, who has in his possession the confidential letter sent by his father to the archbishop of Mainz. Seyfried had paid a farewell visit to Bertha, who is reported to be raving. Zawisch frees Seyfried from the hands of Milota. At the approach of the queen he puts a letter under the half-raised foot of a statue of Venus, placing it so that the queen must see it.

Kunigunde.

Who hurried hence? 'Twas Rosenberg, the shameless!

Let him come back!

Maid (calling after him).

Herr Zawisch! Back, come back!

The queen commands that you return at once.

(Zawisch reappears, affectedly twirling his hat in his hand.)

Queen.

I know not, sir, if I may trust my senses;

Have fever dreams held captive me of late,

Or are you really so lost to shame,

So 'reft of reason—vainly seek I words,

A madman's freak perhaps had best I call it—

So madly impudent, as seems your conduct?

When I arrived, a cry you uttered loud—

O it was you! Near was I, and I heard it!
 Since then, where'er I turn, your glances follow,
 Such glances as defy description,
 And fill me with disgust in thought of them.

(Approaching Zawisch.)

When at the recent dance my hand I gave you,
 You, in your impudence, you dared to press it!
 Sir, do you know my place and yours!

Zawisch.

Forgive!

Queen.

Are queens thus treated in this land of yours?
 Disdained I not in my own cause to rouse
 My husband's ire, and were Bohemian ways
 Like those which are the custom of my home—
 Where claims the wife the right, the voice, and power,
 To carry into action what she wills,
 Where queen not only the king's consort is,
 But mistress of the land—sir, you should rue.

Zawisch.

Forgive!

Queen.

Forgive? What? First so impudent,
 And now so servile, that I, loathing, shrink?
 What did you fasten to yon column there?

Zawisch.

To yonder column?—Is there aught attached?—

Queen.

A billet.

Zawisch.

There a billet? Yes, in truth, there is.

Queen (to her maid of honor).

Take down the thing. What is there written in it?

Zawisch.

I know not.

Queen.

And yet *you* affixed it there.

Zawisch.

I? Truly not!

Queen.

You did, as I approached.

Zawisch.

I was not here. The other way I came.

Queen.

As Heaven help me, have I lost my head?
Has sudden madness seized my senses all?
Are trees these which I see? Do I breathe air?
I saw it plainly, not three steps away,
You stuck the billet to yon column there!

Zawisch.

If so you saw it, O my gracious lady,
Then what you saw is true, though ne'er it happened.

Queen.

And what contains the billet?

Zawisch.

Idle fancies,
Born of a poet's glowing heart and brain.

Queen (*to the maid of honor*).

Show it!

(*She unfolds the paper and reads the superscription.*)

"To the most beauteous"—O the insolent!
Take of thy daring folly here the proof!

(*She throws the billet at his feet.*)

And if a second time thou dar'st approach me,
Then let the king mete out thy punishment!

Zawisch (*picks up the billet and kneels before the maid of honor*).

Know then that I have followed you, your slave;
Long has a secret fire devoured my heart.
Here in these lines I dared confess my love,
Lost am I, lady, if your ire I roused.

(*He rises and leaves.*)

Queen.

Ha, ha, the silly madcap makes me laugh!

Maid.

You see, my gracious lady, how at one, two, three,
A knight I've won who swears true love to me.

Queen.

And do you truly think, 'twas you he meant?
He dares to follow *me*, the hare-brained fool!

Maid.

What harm, my gracious lady, if I cherish
The pleasing fancy, it was I he wooed?

Queen.

What, such a knight? I smile at your conceit!

Maid.

A noble knight in truth! Throughout our land
There's none with Zawisch Rosenberg compares.
You saw his noble bearing and his gait,
The many graces of his manly frame,
As well as I you saw it all, my queen.
And as for martial courage, he transcends
All knights whom on the battlefield he met.
In Padua he studied many years,
And verses writes he, and he plays the lute.

Queen.

More is the pity!

Maid.

Pity, gracious lady!

Queen.

Because musicians in my land are paid
Their pittance, and contemptuously dismissed.

Maid.

It is not so with us. Our noble knights
Do not disdain to vie with troubadours,
And more than one heart has Sir Zawisch won
With song and sweet sound, as he played the lute.

(She opens the billet.)

But you shall see yourself.

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Queen (sitting down).

O he shall pay for this!

Maid (reads).

"O snowlike hand—"

Queen.

A snowlike hand? What means!—

Maid.

White as the snow is.

Queen (takes off her glove and looks at her hand).

He saw my hand? At most my glove, methinks.

Maid (reading).

"O snowlike hand

In fiery mould—"

Queen (impatiently stamping the floor).

Maid.

Your favor, gracious queen?

Queen.

Read on!—that is—

That is to say, continue, if you choose.

Maid.

"O snowlike hand

In fiery mould,

O glowing gaze,

Yet icy cold!"

Queen.

Would it were glowing that it might consume!

I'd torture him till vengeance had its fill.

Maid.

"O snowlike hand

In fiery mould,

O glowing gaze,

Yet icy cold!"

Queen.

Be silent!

Maid.

"O melt, thou gaze,

O heart, relent

O hand—"

Queen.

Silence I tell thee, not another word!
The silly child would fain believe it hers!

(She rises.)

Oh, would I were away, away from here,
In Hungary, my home and that of mine,
Where I might live my life, and roam at will!
There let me be, by deep desire recalled.
My aged parent there obeyed my wish,
The princes bowed, and all their retinue,
Whate'er was man in that unbounded realm,
And in his veins had passion, courage, fire.
But no! they called me to their distant Prague;
A king, they said, ruled o'er them and their land,
In manly strength chained to an older spouse,
Who thirsted for a consort fiery like himself,
For equal courage in a heaving breast.
I come, and find a gray-beard, yes a dotard,
For are not mixed with gray his beard and hair?
They say his wars have dyed them. What of that?
Is he not moody like an aged man,
Insistent on his right and quarrelsome? By God,
Not to be silent and obey I came.
Let others flatter, beg and lick the dust,
Their blood is sluggish, and their hearts are cold.
This Rosenberg alone, were he in Hungary,
Would proudly under God's free heaven stand,
Like him, the daring leader of our race,
Whom he resembles in his mien and frame,
The best of Hungary's heroic men;
Yet unlike him who fearless rushed to deeds,
In his endeavor straight and straight in all he did.
With stealthy step the coward Czech proceeds,
And lowly trails his manhood in the dust.

(Sound of trumpets.)

What sounds are these?

Maid. The tournament is over,
 And honored shall be the victorious knight.
 You, gracious queen, are to bestow the guerdon.

Zawisch von Rosenberg returns in triumph from the tournament, and stands before the king.

Ottokar.

You! Ah, you triumphed in the tournament,
 A valiant knight, as ever you have been.
 Go to the queen, receive the prize bestowed!

You, Füllenstein! *(Turning to Füllenstein.)*

Füllenstein.

My lord, at your command.

Ottokar.

Select a faithful band, to guard each gate.
 When homeward from the feast our guests depart,
 Arrest the persons I shall designate,
 And hold as hostage each, in prison close.
 I trust not yonder man!—Nor Lichtenstein,
 Nor smooth-faced Ulrich—

Füllenstein.

Heinrich surely not.

Ottokar.

Why speak'st thou loud? Come here, and listen silent!
(He retires with Füllenstein into the background and speaks to him in a low voice. Whenever Füllenstein replies, the king turns his gaze toward the other side, where Zawisch and the queen converse. Zawisch stands before the queen, who sits lost in thought.)

Maid (calling the queen's attention to the presence of Zawisch).

My gracious lady!

Queen (noticing Zawisch).

Dare you follow here?

Maid (pointing to the embroidered sash which a page carries on a velvet cushion).

His guerdon!

(The queen takes the sash, and the page deposits the cushion at her feet.)

Zawisch (to the maid of honor).

Damsel, hand me back the billet
Which in your hand I placed a while ago!
It was intended for another hand.

Maid.

Sir Knight!—

Zawisch.

Hand back the billet!
(Stretches out his hand.)

Maid.

Pardon me!

Zawisch (still with outstretched hand).

It is for some one else!

Maid.

I have it not.

Zawisch.

You have it not? It is no longer yours?
Then truly has it reached the rightful owner!

(He throws himself on the cushion before the queen and speaks effusively.)

O thanks, my queen! a thousand, thousand thanks—
(In more measured tones.)

Thanks in advance for what I shall receive.

Ottokar (interrupting his conversation with Füllenstein).

Why do you not confer the guerdon, wife!

Kunigunde (offended).

I was about to do so ere you spoke.

(Approaching Zawisch with the sash.)

Sir Knight!

Zawisch.

O blessed hour, my gracious queen!
I humbly bow, devoted to your service.

(In a low tone.)

“O snowlike hand,
In fiery mould.”

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Queen (in a low tone).

Be silent!

Zawisch (loud).

With this precious guerdon armed

In place of armor, of all weapons bare,

A wanderer shall traverse I the world,

And herald, queen, your fame, and his, my king's,

Prepared to fight for you and him, and die!

(In a low voice and rapidly, while the queen, sash in hand, bends over him.)

Let aged men take aged wives! To youth

Shall youth be mated!

(The queen throws the sash to the ground.)

Ottokar (calls).

Have you finished, there?

Zawisch (in a low voice).

His head shall fall if so be your command!

Ottokar.

What say you?

Zawisch.

That the sash fell to the ground.

Queen (to the maid).

Hand me the sash! If patience slowly wins,

Rash insolence may likewise reach its goal.

Here, take the sash, and fare you well, Sir Knight!

(She places the sash around his neck. As she bends over him, Zawisch seizes a ribbon tied to her sleeve. The bow is undone, and the ribbon falls to the ground. Zawisch bends quickly and picks it up.)

Queen.

The king, O Heavens!

(Ottokar turns to her.)

Zawisch (who has risen and retired to the background).

The queen, my gracious lord!

Ottokar.

What is it, Kunigunde? Your desire?

(A pause, during which the queen fixes her eyes on Zawisch, who quietly remains standing, looking straight before him. She glances once more at him, then addresses the king.)

Queen.

Shall you to-day proceed to hunt at Ribnik?

Ottokar.

Why ask this question? Yes, I shall, to-day.

But you are troubled. What has taken place?

If to bestow the prize has taxed you so,

In future I shall save you needless pain.

(He turns away.)

Queen (in a low voice to her maid of honor).

He must return the bow. Tell him, he must!

(Ottokar has stepped into the middle of the hall; those assembled form a semicircle, at one end of which, on the left, is the queen, Zawisch being on the right.)

Ottokar.

Sore, gentlemen, am I perplexed by care,

Which one of you I trust will lift from me.

Old Merenberg, he, Styria's faithless son,

To me and to his land has turned a traitor.

With letters for the archbishop of Mainz,

In haste he has dispatched his son to Frankfort—

Where the electors meet, to choose the emperor—

My own election, mayhap, to prevent,

To spread disorder, kindle mutiny.

The son, unfortunately, has escaped,

But condign punishment awaits the father,

And full disclosure his confederates.

The miscreant is in his home intrenched,

His castle safely guarded from attack.

Whoe'er shall bring him here, bring him alive,

All his estates, by treason forfeited,

Shall him reward who seizes Merenberg.

Ortolf von Windischgrätz, will you attempt?

Füllenstein.

And let me be the second, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

Among my men the best you may select,
This one—and that—

(Pointing out several soldiers in the rear.)

Maid (approaching Zawisch).

The queen is sore displeased.

Return to her the bow, is her command.

Zawisch.

Return the bow? Not for the world, my child!
In conquest won, it fairly is my own.
Ask for my life, but not, not for the bow!

(He takes it out.)

See but its beauty! Fair as thy sweet mouth,
And white as shines the silver of thy neck.

(He touches her shoulder with his finger.)

No, this I keep, and next to shield and helmet,
The bow shall rest in splendor on my bier.
Did I not risk my blood to gain this prize?
Thou blood-red bow, mine art thou evermore!

(He holds it aloft.)

Queen (on the other side of the stage).

He raves, the madman! Heaven, if the king—

Maid (to Zawisch).

The queen doth motion, quickly hide the bow!
The king is near.

Ottokar.

What is it, Rosenberg?

Zawisch (who has put the bow into his bosom).

O nothing, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

What, nothing say you?

Zawisch.

There are some things, my gracious lord and master,
To be concealed by right e'en from the king.

Ottokar.

A pledge of love?

Zawisch.

A pledge one loves, my lord.

Ottokar (*after a pause*).

Who dressed the queen this morning?

Maid.

I, my lord.

Ottokar.

Art thou so careless, wench, that but one arm
Thou dost with silken bow adorn, the while
The other bare?

Maid.

The bow is surely—lost

Zawisch (*stoops as though looking for it*).

It shall be found then.

Ottokar.

Never mind, Herr Zawisch!

When void the hall, the looking will be easier.

But by this evening I shall hope to see it.

And him who finds it you may give this ring,

(*He takes a ring from his finger and hands it to Zawisch.*)

In my wife's name, intended for his wife;

For queens may diamonds bestow at will,

But ribbons not, to deck the bosom with.

And, queen, you will in future heed your dress,

And likewise heed your dignity with care.

(*To Zawisch.*)

Mind what I say, and tell it to the finder!

Queen.

In my name, sir, and tell him furthermore:

Let him retain whatever he may find;

What I bestow, if diamond or bow,

Its nature loses as it leaves my touch,

And is a gift but of the sovereign queen.

And also let him know that I am mistress,

And free to give more precious tokens still
Than bow or diamond, as I may choose.

(She leaves.)

Ottokar (paces up and down, then stops, addressing Zawisch).

What has occurred here, speak thou, Rosenberg?

Zawisch (bending his knee).

Have I unhappily displeased my lord?

Ottokar.

Thou dar'st in silly mood to rouse my ire,
The ire of Ottokar, and this because
Thy idle fancy prompts an idle whim?
Who art thou, foolishly to dare such deed?
A nod from me—and Rosenberg has been.
But well I know thy cautious mind—Arise!

Zawisch.

Not if in anger you command.

Ottokar.

Arise!

(Zawisch gets up.)

Ottokar (to a servant).

Go with this message to my wife: No longer
Shall her abstention mar this festive day,
Let her return, our gayety to restore.
And, Ortolf, you, begin the promised work
Which, when accomplished, rich reward shall bring.
Let them invoke the powers of the realm!
The realm am I!

Servant (returning).

The queen is indisposed.

Ottokar.

Oh, illness such as hers I cure with ease!
Ask her once more to come, 'tis my desire.
And now, ye lords, rejoin the festive throng,
Let dance and joy resume their wonted reign
Till dawns the day.

(To Füllenstein.)

Remember my command!

Füllenstein.

It shall be heeded.

(*Servant returns.*)

Ottokar.

Comes the queen at last!

Servant.

Her Majesty refuses to appear.

Ottokar.

She comes not, does refuse, when I command?

Tell her!— But no, her better sense will tell her.

A woman's whim has claim on our indulgence,

And now be gone, my lord!

First Deputy of the Empire.

My gracious king!

Ottokar.

What, you still linger here, Sir Deputy?

Deputy.

I still await your Majesty's reply

To those who sent me here, the realm's electors,

The Holy Roman Empire's.

Ottokar.

Sir Ambassador,

It is not easy off-hand to reply.

I am a king who rules o'er many lands,

Too many, almost, for my single strength,

And now I am to shoulder greater care,

Care for a land which wants to share my troubles

And in my council sit as well. I'm used,

When I command, to be obeyed forthwith;

'Twere death for any one to answer, no!

What can your princes offer me, pray, tell?

Pledged are the customs and the revenues;

Whate'er the emperor formerly called his,

With greedy hands this prince and that have seized

As spoils, the while the interregnum drags.

Why should I risk the substance of my crown,

My own lands' wealth for such deceptive gain?

You, gentlemen, would fain accept my purse,
To help supply your dire necessities.
But I would rather sit here in Bohemia,
And laugh at the poor German emperor's stress,
Than be that German emperor myself.
Yet scorn I not to crown the greatest might,
If such fate wills, with greater dignity,
To occupy the throne of Charlemagne,
A second Charles to sit, the empire's lord.
But they must first themselves bring here the crown,
On yonder cushion place it there for me,
Before I shall decide what is to be.
I have despatched my chancellor to Frankfort;
Herr Braun of Olmütz, he attends the diet,
And writes *(producing the letter)*
that the electors soon will choose.

A compromise, he says, has been effected
By which the Elector Palatine proclaims the vote.
True, he's no friend of mine, nor he of Mainz.
They are intriguing, writes my chancellor.
Yet dares no German prince, among them all,
Provoke the wrath of frowning Ottokar.
The crown is mine—if to accept I care.
But first let it be here, then I'll decide.

Servant.

The chancellor, my lord, Herr Braun of Olmütz.

Ottokar.

You see, he has returned.

Servant.

With him a knight,
In armor bright, adorned as fits a prince,
And heralds two, bearing the empire's colors,
The eagle at the breast. Hear now their trumpets!

Zawisch.

Permit us, royal lord and emperor,
That we, the first, of your most loyal subjects—
(*The entire assemblage presses forward.*)

Ottokar.

Stand back! Doth think the diet's deputy
That he confers unlooked-for happiness?
Nor is it clear that I accept the honor.

(To the deputies who retire to the rear.)

Why do you go? Not thus are you dismissed?
Nought has occurred to interrupt your task,
But he of Mainz, tell him that he beware!
When I shall see the Rhine, as soon I will,
His dastardly intrigues the man shall rue
Who has too long disgraced the bishop's see.

(Enter the chancellor. Surrounded by eager questioners, he remains in the background, wringing his hands.)

Ottokar (continuing).

Nor does the Palatine command my favor.
Let the Bavarian have his electorate.
O more than one thing shall be changed anon,
And all those pointed out here in this letter—

Zawisch (venting his astonishment, though in a subdued voice).

The empire's choice, then, was not Ottokar?
(The chancellor, with folded hands, shakes his head.)

Zawisch.

Who else then was it?

Chancellor.

Rudolph, Count of Hapsburg.

Ottokar (who in the meantime has shown the deputies the letter, pointing here and there with his finger).

These have to go, and this —

(At the first word of the chancellor he listens intently. When he hears the name Hapsburg, he starts convulsively, the hand which holds the letter trembles, and he stammers.)

And this must go!

(His hand drops, he all but sinks to the ground, but summoning all his strength, he leaves the hall with a firm step.)

Zawisch.

Can it be true, your message, chancellor?

Chancellor.

But too true, Hapsburg is the emperor.

Zawisch.

How did it happen?

Chancellor.

All presaged success;

The princes voted mostly for our lord,
When suddenly appeared the chancellor
Of the archbishop of Mainz—he who was here—
And with him Wolkersdorf of Austria,
And Hartneid Wildon from the land of Steier,
These charged—but hush! the king returns.

Ottokar (re-enters).

Go, tell the queen to be in readiness,
Before the sun sets I shall hold the chase.

(He paces up and down with a firm step.)

Chancellor (after a pause).

O, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

What is it? You here—you?

Chancellor.

Alas!

Ottokar.

And it was you who spoke?

Chancellor.

Ah, yes!

Ottokar.

Damnation!

(Throws his glove in his face, then seizes his hand, and takes him to the foreground.)

What was all this idle chatter

About the diet and the diet's choice?

Chancellor.

Hear from these men the tale!

(Enter the burgrave of Nuremberg, preceded by two heralds and followed by several attendants.)

Ottokar (advancing).

Who are you, sir?

Burgrave.

Frederick of Zollern, sir, my name is,
Burgrave of Nuremberg, sent by the empire.

Ottokar.

Good luck!

(He turns his back on him.)

Burgrave.

Rudolph, by God's grace emperor—

Ottokar.

Sir Knight, am I to be the empire's butt?
Here still before me stand the deputies
Who offered me the crown, and ere I speak
You make another man your emperor!

Burgrave.

The chancellor of the archbishop of Mainz
Has told, sir, how, contemptuous, you refused
The sovereign crown and all that it implies.

Ottokar.

O German barons, faithless to your pledge!

Burgrave.

Do you accuse thus princes of the empire?
Know then why you did forfeit their support!
We sought a sovereign just, of gracious ways,
Such we believed you when the crown was offered.
But news there came, confirmed by witnesses,
And loud was thundered in the princes' ears,
That you had sorely wronged Queen Margaret,
Had cast away from bed and home your wife,
And also heard they how you wronged the lands
That rightfully to Germany belonged;
How your disfavor threatens life and soul
Ere law and justice speak. Not such the ways

That rule the men of Swabia and the Rhenish lands.
 We want a kindly and a gracious lord,
 Above all, one who knows what justice is.
 And thus reflecting, did they cast their vote.

Heinrich von Lichtenstein. (Behind the scene.)

O treachery!

Ottokar.

Whose voice?

(Several of the assembled knights call out:)

'Tis Lichtenstein!

Heinrich von Lichtenstein (advancing).

Whoever calls himself an Austrian, beware!

The castle gate is watched by servile men,

Who lay their hands on all who're not Bohemians.

Füllenstein (follows him with drawn sword).

Surrender!

Ottokar.

Heinrich, you! And Ulrich, you!

Count Bernhard Pfannberg, Seldenhoven, you,

And Wulfig Stubenberg—give up your swords,

And give your persons into custody!

Lichtenstein.

And our offence?

Ottokar.

That you may not offend,

To prison I assign you. Shall you also run

To greet the newly risen Majesty,

Like Wolkersdorf and Wildon? O the traitors!

And Merenberg— (Stamping on the floor.)

Who brings me Merenberg?

When I shall pluck him from his craggy nest,

And, face to face, accused you all shall stand,

Woe to the man who guilty knows his soul!

(Turning to Zollern.)

And now continue. Let your tale be finished!

(The hostages are led away.)

Burgrave.

What here I see may save the explanation
 Why, sir, not you were chosen emperor.
 And this my message to Bohemia's king:
 Rudolph, the Holy Roman Emperor,
 Asks for a given day at Nuremberg
 Your presence, as the bearer of the cup,
 Your dignity befitting as elector,
 And also that you may receive in trust
 The lands you rule, Bohemia and Moravia.

Ottokar.

These only? What? Not Austria, not Styria?

Burgrave.

These, Carniola and Carinthia,
 And Eger, Portenau, the Wendish March,
 You shall surrender to the emperor,
 Retained too long 'gainst warrant of the law.

Ottokar.

Ha, ha, ha, ha! You tell a merry tale!
 Is there nought else the emperor demands?

Burgrave.

Only what is the realm's!

Ottokar.

But, sir, 'tis mine!

From Hungary I wrested Styria
 With my own blood, with my Bohemians' blood;
 Carinthia is my uncle's legacy,
 By law now mine through mutual exchange,
 And Austria as a dower came to me
 From Margaret, my queen and wedded spouse.

Burgrave.

And where is now the queen?

Ottokar.

Though now divorced,

She did confer anew what she had given,
 And mine is all that formerly was hers.

Burgrave.

According to decree of Emp'ror Frederick,
 The lands of Austria and Styria revert
 Not to the sisters of who last held fief,
 But to his daughters; and Queen Margaret
 Was sister to the duke of Babenberg,
 Duke Frederick, the last of the male line.
 The empire's lands cannot be thus transferred,
 Nor pass from hand to hand by marriage pact.
 You must return the holdings of the realm.

Ottokar.

I doubt not your new sovereign would accept
 With real pleasure all those smiling lands,
 A gift to his poor Swabia, to enrich
 His meager purse and fill his empty hand.
 Not so, my friend! I am now old enough
 To balance carefully my gain and loss.
 Go back and tell the German empire this:
 —I do not know a German emperor—
 Full many a vulture shall on carrion feast
 Ere they will gain what is Bohemia's own.
 He would invite me? Tell him, I shall come,
 And merry guests will join me at the feast.
 When they begin to dance the earth shall quake.
 This tell your sovereign, sir, and now farewell!

Zawisch.

And we—to arms for glorious Ottokar,
 With heart and soul to battle for his cause!
(He leaves; others are about to follow him.)

Ottokar.

Stop ye! To arms? Wherefore? For whom? 'Gainst whom?
 Throughout the land let each man think and act
 As is his wont in times of piping peace.
 When ripe the hour, I'll name the feast and guests.
 Now follow me! The new-fledged beggar king
 Shall not have power to save a fleeing deer!

To-morrow's chase at Ribnik suits my mood,
 You are invited all to share the sport.
 Fetch lights! 'Tis getting dark. Where are the torches?
 Now for a merry hunt! Out to the woods!

(It is getting darker. A short pause, after which there is heard the sound of a guitar in the distance.)

Maid (leaving the queen's chamber).

So they have left! Who plays there the guitar?

Queen (entering).

What means this? Who's the player?

Maid (listening).

Hush!—I know not—

But these the words:

“O snowlike hand

In fiery mould.”

It is Herr Zawisch Rosenberg. He sings.

Shall I forbid the music?

Queen (sits down).

Let him sing,

'Tis sweet to listen in the evening air.

At the opening of the third act old Merenberg is taken prisoner in his castle by Füllenstein and Windischgrätz. The second scene shows Ottokar's camp on the left bank of the Danube. The chancellor incurs the king's displeasure by speaking of the growing accessions to Rudolph's army and of his popularity throughout the empire. He implores Ottokar to listen to the compromise Rudolph proposes through his herald. Zawisch urges Ottokar not to yield, but the chancellor accuses him of insincerity and succeeds in persuading Ottokar to see Rudolph. The king enjoys in advance his fancied triumph at the meeting:

For truly, Zawisch, I should like to see him,

Watch his demeanor toward Ottokar.

The poor knight Hapsburg in the emperor's garb,
 What will he say when in the self-same tone
 With which I called to him at Kroissenbrunn:
 "Count, forward and attack!" I now demand
 Austria, Styria and the empire's fiefs?
 That were a victory without an army!

Zawisch.

Yet should he slyly and by tricky ways—

Ottokar.

Be it then, chancellor, as you have proposed.

Chancellor.

A thousand thanks!

Ottokar.

Ah, thank not prematurely!

I shall not go exactly as you'd have me.
 I see him stand and try to plead his cause,
 Whilst I retort: Keep your imperial robes,
 I hanker not for them; wear them in peace,
 But, sir, my country, you shall never touch!
 And now farewell, and may the Lord be with you!
 At most we'll grant him some small patch of ground,
 That he may boast of it at home and say:
 A conquest for the Empire we have made.
 This joy I shall not grudge him. Chancellor, come,
 On peace and compromise you see me bent;
 In this you lead us on, and we shall follow!
 Let all in camp with me, both high and low,
 (*turning toward the entrance*)

Be ready, and display their finest garb,
 Their armor, rich with gold and silver decked;
 A sorry fellow whose equipment fails
 A hundredfold that emperor to outshine!

(*Exit Ottokar, followed by the others.*)

(*The island of Kaumberg in the Danube. Camp of the Imperialists. In the background a rich tent, decorated with the imperial eagle. A few steps lead up to it. Enter a*

captain, followed by several soldiers, who are trying to keep back the clamorous multitude with their crossed halberds.)

Captain.

Let them come in, the emperor permits it!

(The people rush in.)

First Citizen.

Here is a good place, here let us remain!

Second Citizen.

But will he pass here, so that we may see?

Woman (to her child).

Keep close to me, and mind your flowers, child!

Swiss Soldier.

Where is our Rudi? I'm his countryman,

And have a grievance for the emperor's ear.

Captain.

Have patience! But you see the tent is opening.

(Emperor Rudolph seated at a camp-table in the tent. Before him a helmet, which he is mending with a hammer. He looks at the finished work with satisfaction.)

Rudolph.

That ought to serve me now for quite a while.

(Looking around.)

I see they come.—George, help me put this on!

(A servant assists him in putting on his coat.)

First Citizen.

Say, master blacksmith, saw you how he held,

The emperor, a hammer in his hand?

Three cheers for Rudolph!

Second Citizen.

Hush! For here he comes.

(The emperor descends the steps.)

Seyfried von Merenberg.

My gracious lord!

Rudolph.

How, Merenberg, is't you?

Be not in fear, your father shall be free.

My word for it. Throughout the realm reigns peace,
 Vouchsafed at last by the Almighty's hand,
 And so it shall be in your Austria, too.
 Bohemia's king to-day comes for a talk,
 And I shall think of you before all else.

(Merenberg retires. A child with a bouquet runs toward the emperor.)

Rudolph.

Whose is this child? What is your name?

A Woman.

Kathrina!

Kathrina Fröhlich, burgher child from Vienna.

Rudolph.

Don't stumble, Kathi! Ah, a pretty child!
 A gentle soul shines through her fine brown eyes
 And mischievous withal. So young and roguish!
 Your pleasure, my good woman?

Woman.

O my lord!

Bohemian troops have burned our house and home,
 And sick my husband lies from deep chagrin.

Rudolph (to one of his attendants).

Write down her name, and see what can be done.

(To the woman.)

What I can do to help that will be done.

Swiss Soldier (advancing, behind him three or four others).

With your permission, gracious countryman!

Rudolph.

Ah, Walter Stüssi, from Lucerne! Your errand?

(To the child.)

Now, Katharina, run there to your mother;
 Your father shall be helped, go tell her that!

(The child runs to her mother.)

Swiss Soldier.

I and the others here from Switzerland
 Have come to ask if so you may be pleased
 To let us have some money.

Rudolph.

Ah, my friend,

A good thing money is. Would that I had it!

Swiss Soldier.

So you have none? And yet you go to war?

Rudolph.

My friend, you know how matters were at home.

Our peasants often garnered summer grain,

To last them through the winter until spring.

But if spring haply lingers until May,

Instead of March, and snow enwraps the soil

—Which otherwise might harbor early seed—

If then the hoarded plenty disappears,

Do you call reckless him who has to use it?

Swiss Soldier.

No, Heaven forbid! That many a man has done,

And you? I see—

(Addressing his countrymen.)

He is that peasant now,

And if the winter lasts—I mean the war;

And eaten up the grain—I mean the money—

Well, sir, we mind not waiting still a while,

But until then the peasants must provide.

Rudolph.

If you care not to stay, free is the road!

But he who's not content with soldier's pay,

And lays his hand on peasant property,

Shall hang, and were he my best friend!

Swiss Soldier.

A simple question

I thought was free. I merely liked to know.

Three or four days we willingly shall wait;

Perhaps things will improve till then.

Rudolph.

Do so.

My greetings to the good folk of Lucerne!

(The emperor turns to go.)

Ottokar von Horneck (advancing).

My gracious lord and emperor, hear me, too!

Rudolph.

Who are you?

Horneck.

Ottokar von Horneck, sir,

Liege to the noble Ott von Lichtenstein,
Whom holds the king, with other noble knights,
'Gainst law and judgment in confinement close.
I plead for him, and for our country, too,
A good lord he, and good this land of ours,
Deserving that a prince take up its cause.
Where can you find its equal on this earth?
Look round you, and wherever turns your eye,
It smiles as smiles the bridegroom on his bride.
Its verdant meadows, fields of golden grain,
With flax and saffron spread in varied hues
And flowers fragrant, and with healing herbs;
Thus stretch its valleys and its plains their breadth,
A garland rich, as far as eye can see,
Tied by the Danube's silvery band around.
It rises gently up to vine-clad heights,
Where tempts in terraced rows the golden grape
That swelling ripens in God's glowing sun,
The darksome, teeming woods the crown of all.
And God's breath hovers over mount and dale,
And warms and ripens plants and quickens pulse,
As never pulse is quickened on cold steppes.
And therefore is the Austrian gay and frank,
His frailties unconcealed, as are his joys,
Unenvying, but willing to be envied.
Whate'er he does is done with gladsome spirit.
Perhaps in Saxony and on the Rhine
There are good folk, much better read in books,
But would you know what fitting is in need,
What pleases God and man; seek you clear sight,

An open mind that quickly finds the right—
 Then take the Austrian. Among them all
 He holds his own, talks little and thinks much.
 O blessed land, thou fatherland! Hemmed in,
 'Tween Italy, the child, and Germany, the man,
 Thou lie'st a rosy youth, in growing strength.
 May God preserve thy blithesome ways and spirits,
 That turn to good the evil others wrought!

Rudolph.

An honest man this!

First Citizen.

Yes, sir, and a scholar!

He writes a chronicle, and you, the emperor,
 Appear in it.

Rudolph.

Not painted black, I trust!

Thy master, be assured, will soon be free.
 And thou, in memory of this hour, accept
 This chain, a not unworthy ornament
 For honest learning and for honest deed.

*(He takes a chain from his neck and hangs it around Horneck;
 who has knelt down. Rudolph then addresses one of the
 spectators.)*

Think you, Sir Knight, my favor ill-bestowed?
 When with this sword I shall have touched this man,
 He rises a true knight, as brave as you.
 But many a knight I know not what to touch with,
 To make him write a chronicle like his.
 Put what I say not in your rhymes, my friend,
 I would not have me praise myself through you.

(Enter captain.)

Captain.

My gracious lord, Bohemia's king is near.

Rudolph.

Good God, thy hand has brought me to this pass,
 O finish thou what I began with thee!

*(A camp-stool is brought in. The emperor sits down, surrounded
 by his followers.)*

(Enter King Ottokar in resplendent armor, over which he wears a richly embroidered, flowing cloak. Instead of a helmet he wears the crown. Behind him the chancellor and retinue.)

Ottokar.

In vain I've looked long to the right and left;
Where is your emperor, my noble lords?
Ah, you are here, Herr Merenberg? You here?
I doubt not, we shall elsewhere meet, ere long!
But where is Rudolph?

(He sees him and goes toward him.)

I salute you, Hapsburg!

Rudolph (rising, to those around him).

Why do you stand here, with uncovered heads?
If Ottokar seeks Hapsburg, man to man,
Then Jack and Tom may covered keep their heads;
He is their like, a man— Don't lift your caps!
Yet stands the subject in the liege lord's presence,
Bohemia's prince before his emperor.

(Steps among them.)

Then woe to him who lacks in due respect!

(He approaches Ottokar with rapid steps.)

I greet you, Ottokar. What is your errand?

Ottokar (stepping back in confusion).

I was invited to a—conference.

Rudolph.

Ah, yes, grave public matters to discuss.
I thought it was perhaps a friendly call.
To business then! Why comes Bohemia's king
So late in answer to imperial order?
Three times before I've asked you to appear—
At Nuremberg, at Würzburg, and at Augsburg—
That you receive from me in fief your lands;
But you responded not. The last time came
Instead of you the worthy Herr von Seckau,
Who none too worthily fulfilled his task.

Ottokar.

In fief King Richard gave to me Bohemia!

Rudolph.

Yes, he of Cornwall. Ah, there was a time
When purchasable was in Germany
Much more than merely fiefs and landed wealth.
That time is past, however. I have sworn,
And pledged my faith to my Almighty God,
That right and justice evermore shall reign
In German lands; and thus it shall and must be.
You have done wrong, king of Bohemia,
Imperial prince, to emperor and realm!
The archbishop of Salzburg tells a tale
Of how you carried death into his land,
Your armies spreading ruin and devastation,
In cruelty surpassing pagan wrath.

Ottokar.

Due challenge gave I of an honest feud.

Rudolph.

But feud was not to be! Peace is to rule!
The lands of Austria and Styria,
Carinthia, Carniola, and the Wendish March,
Till now withheld unjustly from the realm,
You will surrender all into my hand!
There's ink and paper here. The document
Is to be drawn up now and sealed forthwith.

Ottokar.

Ha, by the Mighty Lord, am I myself?
Is this still Ottokar? And this his sword?
Am I to be addressed in terms like these?
What is to happen, sir, if failing answer,
I shall retrace my steps across the Danube,
And speak again when leading forth my army?

Rudolph.

A twelve-month back you might have spoken thus,
And on war's bloody die have risked your fate.

You are a martial lord, as all men know,
 And used to victory your armies are.
 Your treasury with silver's filled and gold.
 Not such my outfit, much I lack, in truth;
 And yet, sir, see, my courage fails me not.
 If every man of them forsook my camp,
 With crown and sceptre I should go alone
 To dare the challenge of your threat'ning force,
 And I should call: Sir, give the realm its due!
 I am not he whom formerly you knew,
 Not Hapsburg am I, and not Rudolph I,
 The blood of Germany flows in these veins,
 The pulse of Germany beats in this heart,
 What mortal was in me has left me,
 The emperor am I who never dies.

When called the voice which lifted me on high,
 Who ne'er indulged a dream of regal power,
 And when the Lord placed on my humble brow
 His empire's crown, anointed then I stood,
 In wondering awe, a wonder to myself,
 And there I learned to trust in miracles.
 No prince was once less mighty than myself,
 And now the princes of the realm my vassals!
 Those who disturbed the peace fled at my call.
 Not I did this; His might affrighted them.
 Five paltry coins was all I called my own
 When I took ship at Ulm to join my troops.
 Bavaria's duke rebelled, he soon succumbed;
 Few soldiers brought I with me to this land,
 The land itself in plenty gave me soldiers,
 From out your ranks they came and followed me,
 And Austrians helped me conquer Austria.
 Sworn have I peace and justice to maintain,
 As has ordained the holy, triune Lord.
 And not an inch, a single hair's breadth not
 Shall you retain of that which is not yours.

Thus stand I; and before the eye of Heaven,
I call to you: Give back the empire's own!

Ottokar.

These lands are mine!

Rudolph.

They never were your own.

Ottokar.

Through Margaret, my wife, I came by them.

Rudolph.

Where now is Margaret?

Ottokar.

No matter where,

From her I got them.

Rudolph.

Shall she come herself

To judge between us two?— She is in camp!

Ottokar.

She, here, in camp?

Rudolph (in changed tones).

She, whom you sadly wronged,

Deprived of joys, and of her right deprived,

This morn she came to plead in accents mild

That I spare him who never spared his wife.

Ottokar.

The woman might have saved herself the trouble!

No pleading advocate needs Ottokar!

Rudolph (with emphasis).

Well may she plead, proud ruler of Bohemia,

For at one word from me, sir, you are lost!

Ottokar.

Lost?

Rudolph.

Yes, cut off completely from Bohemia.

Ottokar.

The while to Vienna you lay siege, I free it!

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Rudolph.

Free Vienna? It is mine.

Ottokar.

No!

Rudolph (turning around).

Paltram Vatzo!

Where is Herr Paltram? He desired to see me,
The mayor of Vienna, with the city councillors.

(Enter Paltram Vatzo, burgomaster of Vienna, with several members of the council, carrying the keys of the city on a cushion.)

Paltram.

My lord and emperor, I humbly beg
To lay the keys of Vienna at your feet,
And I do pray that you restrain your ire.
Faith kept I to the king, whom faith I pledged,
Defending Vienna till this very day,
Indeed would, with your leave, have held it longer,
Had not the people forced me to surrender,
Tired of the siege and of their sad privations.

(He places the keys at the emperor's feet.)

My office, with the keys, do I lay down!
But you shall find in me a loyal subject.

(He rises.)

My country's lord is Paltram Vatzo's lord,
Together with my country I surrender. *(He retires.)*

Ottokar.

Accursed luck! O fickle Viennese!
Ye trembled lest your favorite dainties fail!
But ye shall rue it! The approach I'll cut
From Klosterneuburg, my defiant fort.

Rudolph.

Your Klosterneuburg, too, you own no more.
The right shore of the Danube all is mine.
Herr Friedrich Pettau, come!

(Friedrich Pettau advances, with downcast eyes.)

Ottokar.

O shameless traitor,

My fortress thou gavest up?

Pettau.

Not I, my lord.

Attacked without a warning, late last night—

Ottokar.

Enough! I know that traitors are at work,
Yet triumph not! Still shall I thwart your plans!
From Styria approach my goodly troops,
With Milota, their tried and trusty leader;
He seizes in the rear your gathered minions,
While, like the whirlwind, Ottokar swoops down
Upon your front, and mows it down like grass,
Or dooms it to seek refugo in the flood.

Rudolph.

O speak not thus, too rashly daring prince!

Ottokar.

See you at last how distant is your goal!

Rudolph.

My warning hear: Trust not to Milota!

Ottokar.

I stand on solid ground. You ought to tremble.
Our arms decide between us! Now farewell!

Rudolph.

You leave? And give not up the lands?

Ottokar (about to go).

Give up!

Rudolph.

Then speak yourself with Milota, and see
If rightly you can put your trust in him.

Milota (led in fettered).

Rudolph.

Thus did the Styrians bring him to me,
In chains, to pay for his relentless rule.

Remove his fetters! Here behold the flag
Of Styria, and here the Austrian flag!

(Lords of Austria and Styria gather around the emperor, with the banner and the colors of their lands.)

Themselves they sought the empire's mighty shield.
Let sadness not o'erpower you, Ottokar!
Around you look! Dispersed are now the clouds,
And things reveal themselves in their true light.
With Austria lost to you—

Ottokar.

O lost not yet!

Rudolph.

Be not deceived! Your inmost voice foretells
That Austria is lost, forever lost to you.
You were a mighty ruler, a great king,
Ere the occasion to extend your realm
Bred the consuming wish for more and more.
Still shall you mighty be, and rich and great,
Even though lost what you could not retain,
For God forbid that I stretch forth a finger
To seize one jot of what is rightly yours.
Nor could I, for you have a mighty force,
Equipped for battle and inured to war,
Whose issue is uncertain, as I know.
Yet, tempt not fate! Ignore not God's decree,
Which plainly has declared His holy will.
Like you, a proud ambition's prodding spur
Had urged me on when in the flush of youth.
'Gainst friend and foe, at home and in strange lands,
I tried my youthful arm in deeds of strength,
As though the world were made but to give scope
To Rudolph and his sword. Exiled, I joined
Your army in the war 'gainst heathen Prussia,
And the Hungarians at your side I fought,

Though chafing inwardly under restraint
 Imposed by Church and State in petty fear.
 My daring courage yearned for wider fields,
 Then laid His mighty hand on me the Lord,
 And placed me, undeserving, on a throne
 Which seems established to defy the world!
 And like a pilgrim who has scaled a height,
 And now looks down upon the spreading plain,
 And on the walls which long oppressed his soul,
 I felt that from my eyes had dropped the scales,
 And from ambition's idle dream I woke.
 The world was given us that all might live,
 And great alone is the Almighty God!
 No longer dreams the earth its youthful dreams,
 And with the vanished giants and with dragons
 The age of dauntless heroes fled forever.
 No more, like avalanches, hurl their might
 Nations upon each other. Tumult dies,
 And, judging by all signs, I fain believe
 We see the dawning of a better age.
 The peasant peaceful walks behind his plough,
 The burgher busy plies his wonted trade,
 And industries and commerce rule the day.
 The Swabians and the Swiss are planning leagues,
 And their swift ships the Hanse towns expedite,
 In East and North to seek their lawful gain.
 You ever sought to benefit your lands;
 Grant them but peace, most precious of all gifts.
 O Ottokar, what happy days were those
 When, from the Prussian fray returned, we sat
 Upon your lofty castle's balcony in Prague,
 And spoke of future days and future deeds!
 Then near us sat Queen Margaret—
 Would you not see her, now see Margaret?

Ottokar.

Sir!

Rudolph.

O that you ne'er had cast from you that angel
Whose gentle presence soothing comfort gave,
Your flaming ire to blessing often turned,
A loving sister in her ceaseless care!
Your luck you banished when you banished her.
Would you see Margaret? She is in camp.

Ottokar.

No, sir! But I shall take the fiefs you offer.

Rudolph.

Those of Bohemia and Moravia?

Ottokar.

Yes, emperor!

Rudolph.

And to the realm surrender—

Ottokar.

Austria and Styria,
What claims the empire, and has turned from me.
Much have I done for them! Ingratitude,
Man's utter baseness, sickens me to death.

Rudolph.

Come to my tent then, king!

Ottokar.

And why not here?

Rudolph.

The fiefs are but bestowed on him who kneels.

Ottokar.

Kneel, I?

Rudolph.

The tent screens us from curious gaze,
There shall you kneel before God and the realm,
And not before one mortal like yourself.

Ottokar.

Then be it so!

Rudolph.

You will? Blessed be the hour!

Go in before me, and I'll gladly follow;

A glorious victory we both have gained!

(They enter the tent, the curtains closing behind them.)

Milota (joining his followers).

Now God be praised, for once more am I free!

The last days' happenings long I shall remember.

(Enter Zawisch von Rosenberg.)

Zawisch.

Where is the king?

Milota.

In the emperor's tent he is,

His fiefs he takes.

Zawisch.

Ah, ah! But why in secret?

Let all those see it who have loyal hearts!

(He cuts with his sword the cords that hold the tent together; the curtains spread, disclosing Ottokar kneeling before Rudolph, who with his sword has just conferred on him the fief of Bohemia.)

The king kneels!

Bohemians (muttering).

Our king kneels!

Ottokar.

O the disgrace!

(He jumps up and hurries toward the foreground.)

Rudolph (following him, with the banner of Moravia in his hand).

Will you not take Moravia in fief?

(Ottokar bends his knee.)

Thus do I give in fief Moravia,

The margraviate, and take your solemn pledge

To give allegiance to the imperial realm,

As God has willed, and has my power decreed.

And now, my king, arise, and with this kiss

I greet you as my vassal and my brother.
 And you who fealty owe to Austria,
 And lands in fief hold by its ruler's grace,
 With me to Vienna go, to pledge the faith,
 As is your solemn duty to your lord!
 Will you, too, follow, gracious sir and king?

(Ottokar bows.)

I shall await your pleasure then, my lord.
 You, raise the banners, and let joy resound,
 To crown sweet concord's bloodless victory!

(He departs with his followers. Ottokar remains standing, with bowed head. Seyfried von Merenberg, who has remained behind, advances hesitatingly, in a supplicating manner.)
Merenberg.

My gracious lord, I pray you may—

Ottokar (starts up, casting a furious look at Seyfried; he wrests with one hand the buckle from his cloak, which falls to the ground, while with the other he tears the crown from his head. He dashes out, calling:)

Away!

The scene at the opening of the fourth act is in front of the castle at Prague.

(A large gate, with a portcullis, in the middle. Next to it, raised by a few steps, a small closed postern. To the right the gatekeeper's dwelling, containing a stone table and a bench. In front of it a bed of flowers. Milota and Füllenstein enter from opposite sides.)

Milota.

Saw you the king?

Füllenstein.

No.

Milota.

Nor could I find him.

Füllenstein.

At Znaim his retinue lost sight of him,
 He disappeared, with him a single servant.
 Now aimless in Moravia wanders he.

At Kraliz he was seen, at Hradisch, Lukow,
 Last at Kostelez, very near to Stip,
 Where flows a little wonder-working spring,
 To which from far-off pious pilgrims come.
 A wretched hut for bathers lonely stands,
 Deep in a hollow, from the world remote;
 There for a fortnight he remained concealed,
 A solitude to die in, not to live.
 And as the pilgrim's habit is—who throws,
 Plagued by some gnawing unfulfilled desire,
 A cross of fagots down into the well,
 To watch it sink or swim, prophetic of his fate—
 So did he, day by day in sadness steeped.
 This heard at last the magistrate of Hradisch,
 And hurried thither to o'ertake the king,
 But he was gone, and far beyond his reach.

Milota.

And where he now may be you could not learn?

Füllenstein.

They say he has been seen to take the road
 For Prague.

Milota.

Hither?—I hope he finds here rest.
 His daring wings, 'tis true, are somewhat clipped;
 The land which tempted him beyond his sphere
 He has restored with solemn oath and pledge.
 Would he now rule as did his ancestors,
 Expel the Germans from this realm of ours,
 And leaning on his true Bohemian nobles,
 Think only of his nation's happiness,
 Perhaps I might forget how much he sinned
 'Gainst me and mine.—Shall you the chancellor see?
 If so, say that a herald of the empire
 Is now before the gates of Prague. He asks
 A strict fulfillment of the peace concluded,
 Above all freedom for the hostages

From Austria and Styria, still held captive.
 What he demands be granted speedily,
 Ere comes the king and frustrates this and that.

Füllenstein.

But if the king should—

Milota.

Do as you are told!

(Exit Füllenstein.)

Were not the land insulted in his person,
 I, too, should laugh as I heard Zawisch laugh.
 Let everything be done before he comes,
 Then can he but confirm and—go to sleep.

(He retires into the castle. A short pause. A servant of the king appears. He looks carefully about him, then calls back.)

Servant.

'Tis well! No one is here, my gracious lord!

(Enter Ottokar, wrapped in a dark cloak. A black cap with black feathers partly covers his face.)

Servant.

Shall I, sir, fetch the chancellor? Gracious king,
 Would you not rather enter now the castle?
 Two days it is since last you tasted food,
 Nor have you slept. Think of your precious life!

(The king laughs sneeringly.)

Let me entreat you, O retire within!

(Ottokar stamps upon the ground impatiently.)

I go. But seek some rest, my lord, I pray!

(He goes into the castle.)

Ottokar.

Shall I thy threshold cross, ancestral castle,
 And enter thee with desecrating step?
 When I returned victorious, 'mid shouts
 That echoed through the joyful streets of Prague,
 And stood before thee with the banners taken,
 Then gladly didst thou ope thy gates to me,

And my forefathers welcomed me on high.
 For heroes only rose thy mighty walls,
 Untouched by him whose honor bears a stain.
 Here shall I sit, the keeper of my gate,
 To ward off shame from my own house and home.

(He seats himself upon the steps and wraps his cloak about his head.)

(Enter the burgomaster of Prague and some citizens.)

Burgomaster.

Let me depart, I hasten to the council.
 A herald of his majesty, the emperor,
 Is here, and it behooves us not to tarry,
 For once more to the realm is joined Bohemia.
 King Ottokar has given a solemn pledge,
 And kneeling vowed forever to be faithful.

A Citizen.

How, kneeling?

Burgomaster.

Yes, he knelt in the emperor's camp.

He knelt, I say, the while the emperor sat.
 The army saw it all in dumb amazement.
 Who's stirring there?

Citizen.

A man sits on the steps.

Burgomaster.

I oft have said that pride is doomed to fall.
 Go, see who's sitting there before the gate.
 Suspicious folk roam o'er the country now,
 The soldier comes from war in ugly mood.

Citizen (returning.)

O Lord!

Burgomaster.

Thou tremblest, man!

Citizen.

It is the king!

Burgomaster.

That man there on the steps? Thou'rt mad!

Citizen.

I saw his face. Look for yourself!

Burgomaster.

'Tis he!

What if he heard what we have said just now!

Shall I invoke forgiveness on my knees?

'Twere best perhaps to go. He's lost in thought.

(They retire to the background. Benesch von Dieditz and his daughter appear.)

Benesch (leaning on his staff, leading Bertha).

O daughter, see how cheers and warms the sun!

Thou wilt enjoy the air! Come, Bertha, come!

Unwholesome is the closeness of thy room.

And just to please thy father, speak again!

Speak, Bertha, speak, if but a single word!

Say yes or no, child! Thy old father asks!

See, soon it will be— I cannot recall

How long it is since silent thus thou starest.

'Tis pitiful! O Bertha, canst thou talk?

I'd rather hear thee rave in fever heat

Than not to hear all day a single word.

What's past is past. Forget, and all is well!

Burgomaster.

Hush!

Benesch.

Hush! Alas, her mouth is hushed for aye!

Nor day nor night does she unseal her lips.

Burgomaster (in a low voice).

There sits the king!

Benesch.

Where?

Burgomaster.

There upon the steps!

Benesch.

There, Bertha, see, there sits the wicked king,
Who did thee so much harm, my darling child!
Go speak to him and scold him—now's the time—
Say: "I am glad, poor man, of thy misfortune,
For thou hast sinned against me and my father!"

(Bertha picks up a handful of earth and throws it aimlessly, as children do, wide of the mark.)

Yes, throw it at him! Would thou might'st throw daggers!
Throw, Bertha, throw, and hit that wicked man!
But God has undertaken our revenge;
For he has knelt before his bitterest foe,
Before a man whom he had once despised;
In full view of his soldiers did he kneel.
O do not rise, no longer art thou feared!
A greater far than thou has conquered thee.
O if my child could but regain her tongue,
I'd care not who might death inflict on me!

(Enter the queen, with Zawisch and servants.)

Queen.

Who gave admission to yon crazy maid?
Were you not told to keep her in close watch?

Benesch (who is led away).

Come, Bertha, come; he also bears a cross.

Queen.

Away, ye all, whos'er has eyes to see!

(All leave, with the exception of herself and Zawisch.)

We are alone, alone with our disgrace!
Will you not rise, my lord and gracious king,
And use big phrases, as has been your wont?
See, there he sits, the giant-like and proud,
Who thought the world too small to hold his greatness;
There sits he like a beggar out-of-doors,
Whom greets: "God help you!" in a cold contempt—
The man who held his crowns like idle garlands,

Cast off the faded, and put on the fresh,
 Wreathed from the flowers he snatched from foreign
 gardens,
 And held the lives of thousands in his hand.
 For lives to him were pawns to play withal, '
 And chess the game he played with joyful heart,
 When knight and horse he placed upon the field,
 The bloody field of battle's merry sport!
 The very elements he warred against.
 When in the morning he rode out to hunt,
 And saw the sky was somewhat overcast,
 He for the master mason sent forthwith,
 And ordered him to cease at *Güldenkron*
 All work on the new church there going up.
 There sits he, and stares lifeless at the ground
 His proud foot used to stamp in unchecked fury.

Zawisch.

Ah, gracious lady, round is fortune's wheel!

Queen.

The sacred ties of others he made game of.
 He cast from him his wife, *Queen Margaret*—
 Her aged looks, God knows, were fit for him,
 Her sorrowful expression matched his fate—
 And in far Hungary he sought a spouse.
 What cared he if mayhap she'd cast an eye
 On some one else long ere he thought of her;
 If at that very time one not as great,
 And yet much greater, wooed her heart and hand,
 A free and untamed leader of the *Magyars*,
 Outweighing far *Bohemia's* servile king.
 What cared he? He must have a wife and heir,
 And brooked no opposition, his will law.
 In youthful vigor came I to this court,
 Worthy the love of any youthful spouse.
 I came and found—well, a king *Ottokar*,
 Not quite so doleful as yon brooding man,

But not indeed much better, Heaven knows!
 He kept me from his council, scorned my help,
 A servant held me, rather than a queen.
 He to be ruler, and but he alone.

Zawisch.

Ah, gracious queen, 'tis sweet to rule alone,
 Well nigh as sweet as may obedience be.

Queen.

His rule is over, he was once a king,
 A bubble was he; bursting, 'tis no more.
 O he could talk, talk like a mighty prince!
 Of his achievements spoke he loud and well,
 What ne'er had happened and was ne'er to be
 In his mouth *was!* When he of Nuremberg
 The emperor's message first conveyed to him,
 How proud his words, how kingly his demeanor!
 For not a town, a house, nor clod of earth
 Would he give up of Austria's wide domain;
 And if a hundred times should swear the doctors,
 That threatened was the emperor's very life,
 A healing herb from Austrian fields he'd grudge.
 An animal lives on our steppes called mule,
 When he sees from afar the wolf approach,
 He brays aloud, kicks to the right and left,
 And throws the earth up into whirling dust;
 But when the wolf's upon him, he stands trembling,
 And lets himself be torn without a struggle.
 Has not this king been mule-like in his ways?
 Loud-mouthed he set out for the seat of war;
 His army represented half a world,
 Of Poles and Germans, Tartars and Bohemians,
 A varied babel in his noisy camp,
 All Austria too small to hold their number.
 But when the battle's solemn hour approached,
 A heart was lacking to these sturdy arms,
 And Rosenberg was in the enemy's camp.

Zawisch.

My gracious lady!

Queen.

Did you ever kneel!

Not before women, before men, I mean?

For pay, reward, from fear, before your like?

Zawisch.

Not I.

Queen.

And never would?

Zawisch.

Ne'er in my life.

Queen.

But he did kneel, before his enemy,
Before the man whom in his heart he loathed,
Who was his vassal once, to whom he said,
"Come here!" and he obeyed, and said he, "Go!"
He turned, and went in haste, as he was bid.

Zawisch.

My gracious queen, 'twas done by way of jest,
Such as good friends indulge in. But to show
His new-fledged power the emperor desired;
He asked our king's aid, which was freely given.

Queen.

But I shall not be called a vassal's wife,
Nor share a meanly serving creature's bed;
Shall not, when Rudolph orders us to Vienna,
In meekness hold the train of Madam's dress.
I shall not kneel before him, as you did.

(The king jumps up.)

Rise if you will, I do not dread your wrath.
Shall I alone, of women or of men,
Stand trembling before Ottokar the king?
Escort me hence, I seek my Hungary,
Where safer is the honor of a king.

You, Rosenberg, give me your arm. Enough
Of the disgrace to which you were a witness.

Zawisch (leading her away).

'Twas but a jest. We thought it merry sport,
We and the emperor, and mostly he.
A noble sight to see, it was indeed!

(They depart.)

Ottokar.

Zawisch!

Zawisch (returning).

Your pleasure, sir?

Ottokar.

Your sword!

Zawisch (handing it to him).

Here 'tis!

Ottokar (about to pierce him).

Thou traitor!

Queen (calling from within the gate).

Rosenberg!

Ottokar.

Here, take thy sword, and go!

Zawisch.

O many thanks! This is no place to tarry.

(He leaves and joins the queen.)

Ottokar.

Is this my shadow? There are two kings now.

(Trumpets.)

They are approaching. I must seek concealment.

(He wraps his cloak about him and withdraws.)

(Enter an imperial herald, with two trumpeters. Behind them the liberated Austrian hostages, among them old Merenberg. The populace crowds around them. The chancellor argues with the herald.)

Chancellor.

In my king's name do I protest herewith.

Herald (with a document in his hand).

This solemn compact in clause three declares
 All hostages are to be freed forthwith,
 And by the Imperial Majesty's command
 Do I bespeak full freedom for these men
 Of Austria and Styria, subjects they
 Of Emperor Rudolph and the imperial realm.
 And also do I ask complete observance
 Of all the stipulations of the peace,
 One half of which still disregarded are.
 Still lie Bohemian troops in either half
 Of Austria, and Heinrich Kuenring,
 Your faithful champion, devastates the land
 That lies beyond the Danube's farther shore,
 By neighboring Moravia still upheld.
 This shall not be, commands my lord and master.
 To end it all, have I come here from Prague.

Chancellor.

The king must first be notified of this.

Herald.

Why so? Is not the emperor liege lord of all?
 It is agreed so in the vassals' oath.

Chancellor.

The emperor himself has not complied
 With all the rules provided in the pact.
 Imperial troops are quartered in Bohemia.

Herald.

They shall withdraw as soon as you obey.

Chancellor.

Why must Bohemia be first to yield?

Herald.

Luck follows him who *hath*—an old law this.

Chancellor.

You call it law? Force is the name for it.

Herald.

You choose the name, but you must do the thing.

Chancellor.

I have no power to grant, nor to withhold;
The king, 'tis rumored, is in Prague. He can
Alone decide if just be your demand.

Herald.

Take me to see him then.

Chancellor.

Not at this time.

He is in Prague, but that is all we know.

Herald.

Then loudly let the trumpet's call resound,
That through the town each citizen may learn,
And Ottokar himself be duly told:
His liege lord has a message here for him.

Ottokar (steps forward, after throwing off his cloak).

The king is here. And what is your request?

Herald.

The freedom of these men, sir, is withheld.

Ottokar.

Who does withhold?

Herald (pointing to the chancellor).

He!

Chancellor.

Until you shall sanction.

Ottokar.

They were to answer for their country's guilt.
But wiped out is the guilt, take back the pledges;
Though 'mid the men you claim I see a face
Which almost makes me rue what I have said.
Thy countenance conceal, thou Merenberg,
A traitor clearly proven, not a hostage,
The first to point the way to crime and treason!
Hide thee! Within me boils my very heart
And thirsts to cool its passion in thy blood!

(Merenberg steps back behind two other hostages.)

What else?

Herald.

'Tis asked that you withdraw from Austria.

Ottokar.

I have withdrawn.

Herald.

Not fully.

Ottokar.

It shall be!

The compact thus provides, then be it so.

Herald (proclaiming).

Whoe'er has claim against Bohemia's realm,
For right withheld, or damage done to him;
Who from the German empire holds a fief,
Let him repair now to the council hall,
Where shall in judgment sit the Palatine,
Bestowing title on the rightful claimant.
Hail, hail, Rudolphus, Holy Roman Emperor!

(Exit herald, the people following tumultuously. The chancellor alone remains.)

Ottokar.

They follow all. I want to be alone.
You, then, are now my court? O Ottokar!
My very servants flee me in contempt.
Lashed, bitterly, and justly, by my wife.
Chased like a beast, from home and couch expelled!—
I cannot bear it, cannot thus live on!
My name struck from the roll of reigning princes,
A servitor to him I used to scorn,
And my betrayers, freed, depart with jeers!
Hark!

(In the distance is heard the herald repeating his cry.)

Hail, Rudolphus! Hell be his abode!

Call back the herald!

Chancellor.

O my gracious lord!

Ottokar.

The herald call, or, varlet, dread my wrath!

(Exit chancellor.)

Had it not better been to fall in battle,
The last one of my soldiers next to me?
They have betrayed me, caught me unawares;
But now the fog that held my senses lifts.
I had a dream. A cooling morning breeze,
Remembrance comes and wakes me back to life.
I led an army to the Danube's shores,
And then went into camp. This I remember,
All else beyond is night. What further happened,
How they enticed me into Rudolph's tent,
And there— Death and perdition! I shall kill,
Down to the last, whoever saw the sight!
Myself as well if I cannot blot out
The memory of that accurs'd disgrace!

(Re-enter the herald with the hostages. Behind them Milota.)

Herald.

You've called me back once more, my gracious lord!

Ottokar.

Remember, first, that in my name alone
May be proclaimed whatever does concern
My town of Prague!

Herald.

But yet—

Ottokar.

No more, I say!

Let in a row stand up the hostages,
That I may see if, with them, no one else
Escaped from prison, seeking liberty.

Herald.

The empire's word seems ample guarantee;
Yet, if so be your mind, let them stand up.

Ottokar (inspecting the men drawn up in a row).

You may depart, and you!— You seem well pleased,
 Ulrich von Lichtenstein! Do you rejoice
 At being free from duty? Be it so,
 You never loved me, nor cared I for you.
 Our mutual debt is paid. Depart in peace!
 But one there is with whom I must converse.
 God bless thee, Merenberg, though rogue and traitor!

Chancellor.

Would he were silent, scorning contradiction!

Ottokar.

How fares thy son, that serves the emperor?
 An honest fellow, his sire's counterpart!
 Thou in the nick of time didst save thy son,
 Just as began my fortunes to decline.
 When last I saw him, I gave him my pledge
 That at an early day he'd hear from me
 How things were going with me, and with thee.
 What say'st thou if I send him now this message:
 That aged rogue, thy father, lives no more!

(To the herald.)

No hostage is this man, but a vile traitor,
 He cannot leave with all the others there.

Herald.

Precisely him the emperor commanded—

Ottokar.

Precisely him commands his lord, the king—

(To Merenberg.)

The first thou wert, the first, to set the pace,
 Thou showedst the way to treason to the rest,
 Complaints and objections didst thou send to Frankfort,
 And chosen was my enemy, the Hapsburg!

Merenberg.

Not complaints!

Ottokar.

Nor praise. What sayest thou, good friend?

When safe thy son was in the enemy's camp,

The Austrians quickly followed his example,
 And on the Danube's shores I was betrayed,
 Their rightful lord deserted and betrayed!
 Know'st thou where last I set eyes on thy son?
 At Tulln it was, in the imperial camp,
 Where Ottokar, the king—why not confess!—
 Before his enemy—a servant—in the dust—
 O brain, cast out all trace of memory,
 O welcome madness, haste to take its place,
 And in oblivion wrap what happened there!
 Where Ottokar, the king—why not confess
 What all men saw?—before his enemy knelt.
 And this man's son was present, and he laughed!
 And, therefore, must thou die; thou diest, man!

Merenberg.

Almighty God!

Herald.

Consider, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

Consider! Mind your hasty language, sir!
 Yourself consider that were you not now—
 But go in peace, and let me do my pleasure!
 Still am I ruler over this, my land!

Merenberg.

Allegiance Styria owes now to the empire.

Ottokar (to the herald).

He was my vassal when he sinned against me,
 And as my vassal shall I punish him.
 Cast him into the deepest dungeon, and
 Whoe'er brings news that Merenberg is dead
 Shall find a welcome.

Herald.

But the emperor—

Ottokar.

Sir, tell your emperor:
 He may rule Germany as suits his taste,

I have fulfilled what I have promised him;
 Although betrayed, outwitted, and ensnared,
 Whate'er I promised, sacredly I've kept.
 But in my bosom beats a warning voice,
 A voice that calls: Take what they stole from thee!
 Thy honor save! The honor of a king
 Cannot be measured by a thousand lives.
 I was outwitted on the Danube's banks;
 See thou if force shall equally prevail.
 This tell him, sir, and tell him furthermore:
 Peace is established, and the land is his.
 I send the hostages, as he desired,
 But let him not attempt to say one word
 Here in Bohemia that displeases me;
 Let him beware of meddling with my business.
 Else I shall do to him— No, rather say,
 I bid him do it, challenge his defiance.
 Tell him to lead his armies through my land,
 That I may cool my flaming wrath in blood,
 My heart's blood quench my burning hatred's thirst.
 Lie to him, friend, say I reviled his name,
 Called him usurper in a foreign land,
 Who stole from me what clearly was my own;
 Say that I mocked the herald whom he sent,
 Mocked at his man, and sentenced him to death.

Herald.

You cannot do it!

Ottokar.

Cannot? It is done!

Herald.

In virtue of this letter—

Ottokar.

Damn'd the letter!

Shall letters, shall your talk o'er-master me?
 I still have swords. I still command an army
 Unvanquished. If you conquered, 'twas by snares!

And those I tear as I this letter tear
Which foul intrigue has placed into your hand.
(*He snatches the letter from the herald.*)

See here!

(*On the point of tearing it he suddenly stops.*)

Chancellor.

Good God, what meditates he? My dear lord!

Ottokar.

Call here my wife, I want to see the queen!

(*Exit servant.*)

Before the world was Ottokar disgraced,
Before the world must I wipe out my shame!
She thrust the poisoned arrow in my breast,
Let her be witness how I draw it out,
Or else my very vitals pierce with it!

(*Enter the queen.*)

Queen.

Your wish—

Ottokar.

A while ago you railed at me,
Because I yielded, bloodshed to avoid,
And my possessions with the emperor shared.

Queen.

Still do I rail!

Ottokar.

Look here, my hand here holds
The letter which still binds me to the emperor.
I tear it, and I tear with it the tie
That binds me still; free am I as before.
Shall I thus tear it?

Queen.

Can a brave man doubt?

Ottokar.

Weigh well your words! Anew shall rage grim war,
Anew be steeped the land in gore and fire,

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And some fine day it easily may happen
They bring you home your husband on a bier.

Queen.

Far rather at your coffin would I stand
Than lie with you in bed, decked with disgrace.

Ottokar.

So firm! One gentle word were not misplaced.

Queen.

Till you have purged yourself from your disgrace,
Cross not the threshold of my room as husband.

(Turns to go.)

Ottokar.

Remain! Look! Here, I tear the letter!

(Tearing it.)

My honor whole, and open future's gate,
What now betide, we shall together bear;
God grant you part of what awakes within,

(Pointing to his heart.)

And mine the strength be that your bosom filled!

Queen.

Now welcome to your home!

Ottokar.

Not thus, not thus!

I see blood clinging to your fingers white,
Blood still to flow! I say, touch not my hand!
Of softer clay was woman made by God,
And Mercy is her name. What may be thine?
Remembrance wakes and tells a sorry tale
Of how you welcomed the returning king,
Your husband, seeking refuge in his home.
Leave me! I feel my eyes are growing dim—
A sign that it is time for me to go.
Away! Leave me, I say! Away!

(Exit the queen.)

Ottokar (to the chancellor, whose hand he has seized).

Do I seem harsh? She was not kind to me.
It is but give and take. God strikes the balance.

You, herald, need not tarry any longer.

Go, tell your lord what you have witnessed here.

(Turning toward Merenberg.)

For him the dungeon! What shall ward off treason

If not the punishment of proven traitors?

Whoe'er will build must clear the ground of weeds.

Away, thou poison ivy, venom'd creeper!

Merenberg.

O thou rash king, revile me not as traitor!

They are the traitors who stand near thy throne,

The Rosenbergs—

Ottokar.

Speaks malice, too, thy tongue?

Merenberg.

Oh, he who holds me and to prison leads

Is worthier of the prison than am I!

Ottokar.

Ne'er did Bohemian betray his master!

Fresh proof thou furnishest now of thy crime!

Away! The dungeon for the slanderer!

Merenberg (who is being led away).

Too late you'll rue it!

Ottokar.

Off into the dungeon!

Milota.

And if he can't be silent, stop his mouth!

(Exit Merenberg, followed by the herald.)

Ottokar.

Ne'er did Bohemian betray his master,

And vainly spoke the slanderer's biting tongue!

I am about to start upon a war,

To add new glory to Bohemia's might,

And I rely on you as on myself.

Whoe'er mistrusts me disapproves my actions,

Let him withdraw from those who follow me,

Free from reproach, from harm to him and his.

But him who thinks like me, and gladly follows,
 I call my brother and embrace as such.
 The oath I took when I was crowned your king,
 When at my father's solemn bier I stood,
 Once more I utter: Faithful unto death!
 Do ye the same! The world is full of malice.
 Repeat the oath upon your monarch's sword!

(He takes the sword from one of the bystanders; those in front kneel down.)

Kneel not! Arise! For kneeling do I loathe.
 And do not swear! For one may kneel and swear,
 And yet not keep the promise given thus.
 I shall confide in you without an oath.
 And now to work! You straightway go to Breslau,
 To see the Duke, and Prinik, him of Glogau.
 Bid them to Prague to join to ours their forces!
 You go to Germany; from Meissen, Saxony,
 From Magdeburg, the Margrave with the Dart
 Solicit what assistance they may grant.

(To the chancellor.)

You write to all the other lords and princes!
 We shall collect around us such a force
 As will astonish mightily the emperor.
 I am still Ottokar, as they shall see!
 Lend me the power of your trusty arms,
 And what you lost in castles and estates,
 What I took from you, adding to the crown,
 I shall restore, and amply add thereto.
 The Rosenbergs shall have their Frauenberg
 And Aussig, Falkenstein; you, Neuhaus, Lar;
 You, Laun, take Zierotin, and Kruschina be Dub's!
 Take your estates again, and be rejoiced!
 We shall be one, in faithful union joined.
 And, Milota, to you I entrust Moravia;
 An honest soldier, you will hold it true.

(Enter Zawisch von Rosenberg.)

Ottokar.

Ah, welcome Rosenberg! God be with you!
 You doubtless take the field with all the rest.
 Among the foremost in my realm I hold you,
 Above all do I count upon your help.

Zawisch.

Whate'er my brothers do, I, too, shall do!
 Nor from the need of all withhold my aid.

(He leaves.)

Ottokar (whose eyes have followed him, significantly).

A shrewd man he, and one I do not trust!
 You suit me, Milota, straightforward, rude!
 I well believe that you know how to hate,
 But not deceive. In you I place my trust!
 Sir chancellor, have you finished?

Chancellor (writing).

Yes, my king!

Ottokar.

Much have we lost by ill-considered haste,
 Let caution now make good our rashness' fault.
 Does such resolve appease thee, my good fellow?

Chancellor.

O king, chide rashly as you did before!
 I liked it better than your sudden mildness.

Ottokar.

Write to the captain in command of Znaim,
 Let him a thousand men—no, far too many!
 I would not strip the fortress in this way—
 No, with five hundred let him guard the border—
 But then again five hundred are too few.

(Pointing to Milota.)

True, is it not? Write rather that from Iglau—
 No, no!—I'm tired. Two sleepless nights I've had,
 Nor have I eaten. Give me yonder bench.
 I shall attempt to rest here.

Chancellor.

O my king,

Would not your castle better—

Ottokar.

No, no, no!

But fetch my wife! She went hence angrily,

Let her sit near me, talk to me a while,

Till gentle slumber on my lids descend.

Do me the favor, friend, and look for her!

(Exit servant.)

Ah me! How good it is to stretch one's limbs

When one is tired! Go, look to Merenberg!

The old man's couch in prison must be hard!

Though scoundrel he, yet must he not be plagued,

Give him the prison that befits a knight.

(Servant returns.)

Comes now the queen?

Servant.

She will not come, my lord!

Ottokar.

Then let her stay! You come, old chancellor,

And for my head lend me your kindly lap.

When I have rested somewhat you shall see

That still the former Ottokar I am.

(Falls asleep. Füllenstein returns.)

Chancellor.

The king sleeps there.

Füllenstein.

And soon sleeps Merenberg!

When he talked on, arraigning all the world,

A soldier rudely pushed him off the tower.

He'll not survive the fall, it is believed.

Ottokar (sitting up).

O Merenberg, is't you?

Chancellor.

He is not here!

Ottokar.

Methought he stood here! Sleep, oh, only sleep!

(He sinks back and falls asleep again.)

Ottokar's waning fortune is the theme of talk between Füllenstein and Milota in the opening scene of the fifth act. Since the flight of Kunigunde his indecision has become more and more pronounced. He is steadily retreating before Rudolph, but deceives himself into the belief that he is merely setting a trap for the emperor.

Ottokar.

I have enticed him here into these mountains
By planning well-feigned flight. If he proceeds,
My centre yields, both wings surround his army,
Then, emperor, good night! You are entrapped
As is a mouse, ha, ha!

*(He breaks into hoarse laughter, which terminates in a cough.
He rubs his hands.)*

'Tis cold. Bring me a cloak!

The air blows sharp, the sun's about to rise.

(A cloak is brought him.)

Is this a summer night? The fields still stubbly,

And yet 'tis cold. It was not always so.

'Twas warm in summer, winter brought us frost.

Changed are the seasons, and we change with them.

Is there no news about the queen? Where is she?

Servant.

It is not known, my king!

Ottokar.

Is Zawisch with her?

Servant.

Yes, gracious lord!

Ottokar.

I hope to meet them soon!

Is day not breaking yet?

Servant.

Beyond the March

'Tis getting lighter, and the morning nears.

Ottokar (jumps up).

Welcome, O sun, thy rays foretell my fate!

Before thou settest shall I know my doom,

If war bring peace, or peace be in my tomb.

(He throws off his cloak.)

Put out the fires, let the trumpets sound!

Prepare for battle, our last die is cast.

Messenger.

My lord, in flames is Drösing!

Ottokar.

In my army's rear?

Your men stand there, Milota!

Milota.

Scattered bands

These are, of the Cumanian soldiery;

Nor do I trust report.

Ottokar.

Is there no hill near by,

From which to spy the fire's direction?

Servant.

There is the bell tower.

Ottokar.

Hasten to ascend!

(A knock at the door is heard.)

Hungarians there at Drösing? Ah, by God!

The guilty man shall hang! Make haste, I say!

Servant.

My lord, I am refused admittance!

Ottokar.

What, refused!

Servant.

In yonder house are women.

Ottokar.

Women?—Fool!

Sexton (entering).

My lord, the servants of Bohemia's queen—

Ottokar (seizing him).

Bohemia's queen? Her servants? And she, too?

Ah, scoundrel! Is not Zawisch also there?

Oh, they shall feel my wrath!

Sexton.

I pray, my lord!

Ottokar.

Away!

Sexton.

My lord!

Ottokar.

I shall see for myself!

(He forces his way into the building, followed by the sexton.)

Milota.

If he finds Zawisch in the house, he's lost.

I must at any cost attempt his rescue.

(He enters the building, the others retire. A small room terminating in a Gothic arch, before which hangs a dark curtain descending to the floor. Ottokar bursts into the room and is met by Elizabeth, who attempts to stop him.)

Ottokar.

Away, procuress! Where are they thou servest?

Elizabeth.

My gracious lord, O grant her rest at last!

Ottokar.

Yon curtain doubtless covers up a secret.

Sweet darling, come! Up, curtain, show thy sights!

(He tears the curtain aside and staggers back. Upon a platform draped in black, surrounded by burning tapers, lies the body of Queen Margaret in her coffin, the escutcheon of Austria at her feet.)

Ottokar.

She who is here is not Bohemia's queen.

Elizabeth.

She was!

Ottokar.

'Tis Margaret of Austria,
My former wife, but kin of fourth degree,
Therefore divorced as did ordain the Church.
God grant her lasting peace!

Elizabeth.

Aye, amen, amen!

Ottokar.

When died she?

Elizabeth.

Yestermorn, my gracious lord!

Ottokar.

How came she here?

Elizabeth.

Chased from the see of Krems
By soldiers who had strayed there from your army,
She sought to reach the emperor at Marchegg,
When death o'ertook her.

Ottokar.

Why the emperor?

Elizabeth.

My lord, I cannot tell, she said not why,
But peace to bring about, methinks, she tried.

Ottokar.

Yes, she did try—and what did cause her death?

Elizabeth.

I do believe they call it broken heart,
For she cried day and night.

Ottokar.

Enough, enough!

But whither will you go?

Elizabeth.

We shall await

The issue of this war, whate'er it be—

Ottokar.

Whate'er it be!

Elizabeth.

Then go to Lilienfeld,

In the ancestral tomb to bury her,

Where Leopold of Babenberg reposes,

Her father—peace be to her soul!—and Frederick

Her brother, last duke of that noble house.

Ottokar.

Do so, and here this ring—

Milota (entering).

The enemy!

Ottokar.

Soon will I join you! Go!

(Exit Milota.)

And here this ring

From me deposit with her in the tomb.

Elizabeth.

O king!

Ottokar.

And when the war is fought and o'er,

And if I live still, come to me at Prague,

To be rewarded for your faithful service.

But I must go!

Elizabeth (opening the door).

God bless you!

Ottokar (halts at the door).

Margaret!

So you are dead, and I am not forgiven!

And thou hast left me, gentle, loving soul,

A sense of wrong still rankling in thy breast!

Before the mighty judgment seat of God

Thou stand'st, accusing me, and call'st for vengeance!
 O do not so, my Margaret, do not so!
 Thou art revenged. What I exchanged for thee
 Has dropped from me as leaves in autumn drop.
 What I had gathered, scattered has the wind!
 No blessing's mine that Heaven ever sent,
 A lonely man am I, bowed down by grief,
 By no one heard, by no one comforted.

(He approaches the bier.)

O they have harshly dealt with me, Margaret!
 Ingratitude has reared its monster head;
 Those who were nearest me have harbored treason,
 Whom I had raised, conspired to cast me down.
 The wife for whom I gave thy worth in barter
 Has rent in twain the very heart within me,
 And basely sold my honor to my servant.
 And when from battle wounded I returned,
 Not balm, but poison, poured she in my wounds.
 With mock and bitter taunt she urged me on
 Till blind I ran into the ready net,
 Whose meshes hold me in their fatal grasp.

(He kneels down at the coffin.)

Thou hast so oft consoled me; do so now!
 Stretch, Margaret, forth thy icy hand and bless me,
 For I feel what within me death foretells.
 To-day may ruin bring to Ottokar.
 Give me thy blessing, as thyself art blest!

(He buries his head in the cushion.)

Elizabeth.

Methinks he prays. O pardon him, good Lord!
 And ah, the joy when she who is no more
 Meets him in Heaven! Oft and oft I told her
 He would return. Now you two are together.
 Was I not right?

A Voice (outside).

Is here the king?

Elizabeth (calling).

Hush, hush!

He wants to be alone, and must not be disturbed!

(She draws the curtain together.)

For quarrel and for strife there's always time,

But prayer not oft finds kings in ready mood.

Again disturbance! O ye heathen folk!

The sun rises upon the Marchfeld, and Rudolph points out distant Vienna to his son, who for the first time enters Austrian soil. He gives instructions to his knights, and invokes the divine blessing upon the arms of Austria.

(Enter the queen and Zawisch, behind them Bertha, led by attendants.)

Queen.

I've come to find a refuge in your camp.

Rudolph.

Ask you protection of your husband's foe?

Queen.

Because my bitterest foe my husband is.

He raves, and most of all against those nearest,

And but through flight escaped I with my life.

Rudolph.

Much do you thus entrust to me, my queen!

For I know wives—and wives of noble mind—

Who'd rather by their husband's hand be slain

Than fly to him who seeks to slay their spouse.

But you may safely wait within yon tents

Till clear the issue that may bring you peace.

(To an attendant.)

Provide full safety for this noble lady!

Queen.

I thank your Majesty. Come with me, Zawisch!

(Exit.)

Rudolph.

You stand not by the colors of your king!

Zawisch.

The king has grievously offended me.

Rudolph.

Offended? And do you remember this
Now that perhaps he goes to meet his death?
Sir, thank the Lord that you are not my subject,
Or I should freely tell you what I think!
Go, seek your queen, whom you consider king!

(Exit Zawisch.)

One word ere calls the battle. I have heard
Of an agreement made among you men,
On whom but recent knighthood I bestowed,
And who feel grievance against Ottokar.
You men from Austrian lands especially,
I hear, have pledged yourselves to seek the king
In battle and to slay wherever found.
Void, as your lord, say I, is such agreement,
And each and all forbid I to lay hand
Upon King Ottokar at any time,
Unless it be in personal defence.

(Turning to Seyfried Merenberg, who stands next to him.)

You understand me, sir? And now God speed you!

*(A part of the battlefield. Ottokar supported by an attendant.
Two servants and Milota follow.)*

Ottokar.

Herr Milota, your followers attack not!
Where tarry your Moravians? Plague upon them!
I fear me you're a rogue, Herr Milota!
And if a rogue because I trusted you,
Then tenfold are you rogue and hundredfold!
My horse was pierced and fell; still smarts
My leg which bore the unexpected weight.
Fetch me another horse, while here I stay.

(Exit servant.)

You, Milota, make haste, tell your Moravians!—
No, stay! You go and tell the rear-guard

They must attack, or else the plague upon them!

(Exit second servant.)

Do you dare face me, Milota? By God,
Your eyes look furious. At my foes, I trust,
For meant you me, sir, on your dying bed
You would yourself confront a Milota
Whose stare would fix upon your closing eyes.
Mount yonder hill, sir, ascertain forthwith
Where's Füllenstein, and how the battle fares!

(Exit Milota.)

And you, assist my steps to yonder tree.
It will support me till a horse is found,
And give me warning of the foe's approach.

(He reaches the tree and seizes one of the low, dry branches.)

There is no heart in the Bohemians' fight,
They battle as if forced against their will.
The Austrians and the Styrians,
Who grudging service rendered under me,
Transformed into avenging angels are,
Each one a hero proves himself against me:
The day of reckoning 'tis for them and me.

* * * * *

Blind was I, and in blindness have I sinned;
Not consciously have I committed wrong.
Yea, once, and still another time. O God,
I consciously committed grievous wrong.
Not fear of death makes me confess my sins.
Thou, who dost search the hearts of all of us,
Thou knowest that my heart is free from fear!
But if a man's repentance thou approv'st,
Whose crime affrights him, not his punishment,
Behold me kneeling here before thy throne
And hear me pray, as I have learned to pray:
Forgive my sins, be merciful, O Lord!

(Enter Seyfried von Merenberg, in full armor.)

Seyfried.

Ottokar!

Ottokar.

Who calls?

Seyfried (still in the background).

Where is my father?

Ottokar.

Who are you? —Merenberg!

Seyfried.

Where is my father?

Ottokar (murmuring in a muffled voice).

When asked the Lord: Where is thy brother, Cain?

He answered him: Am I my brother's keeper?

Seyfried.

I gave him to you, I myself, in madness!

And now I stand before you, clad in armor;

And claim him back, and ask: Give me my father!

Ottokar.

Well know you where he is.

Seyfried.

Well know I, he is dead.

Ottokar.

A traitor's death he died.

Seyfried.

A traitor, he?

He knew not that I served the emperor,

The letter which he gave me but bespoke

Kind offices for her whom you cast off.

Ottokar.

He is with God!

Seyfried.

He is! Commend to Him your soul!

(He attacks him with his sword.)

(Enter Emerberg.)

Emerberg.

Seyfried, what darest thou?

Seyfried.

Thou com'st in time!

Forbidden has the emperor to slay you
By armed might, but like a basilisk,
I shall endeavor with my eyes to slay you.
Look at me, hear me call now: Merenberg!
The name that hell shall call back: Merenberg!

Ottokar.

Make room, I must now to my army!

Seyfried.

You shall stay!

I called you teacher, called you my exemplar,
I honored you as no one I have honored,
Earth's glory I entombed when you were humbled,
Earth's happiness when struck my father was.
Give back to me my confidence in man,
My father give me, whom myself surrendered,
Myself, into your hand! Thou murderer rash,
Look at me! See my face is Merenberg's.
Come, kill him once more in my countenance!

Ottokar.

Thy visor close, then shall I give thee battle!

Seyfried.

Not so, not so, king! Thou shalt fight the dead!
Brave Ottokar, why such a coward now?

(*Ottokar's servant returns.*)

Servant.

Herr Milota, help! Enemies! O help!

Seyfried (to Emerberg).

Hold back that fellow! He must stand and fight,
That I may tell the emperor: My lord,
I did not slay him, he himself attacked.
If he attacked, you said, he might be slain!

(*Emerberg attacks the servant.*)

Servant.

Herr Milota!

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Emerberg.

Flee!

Servant.

O my lord, my lord!

(He falls, wounded, at the feet of the king.)

Ottokar (taking up his sword, which he had laid down near the tree).

Be it then!

(Enter Milota.)

Ottokar.

Milota, assist thy king!

Seyfried.

Art friend or foe thou?

Milota.

Your foe not, indeed!

Leads to Moravia this road?

Ottokar.

O Milota!

Milota.

My brother, Benesch Dieditz, sends regards.

He died as one bereft of sense and reason.

My cousin Bertha raves beside his bier.

Mind me not, sirs! I pass. Good luck to you!

(He wraps himself in his cloak and departs.)

Ottokar.

Thou goest hence, and I can't call thee knave?

I was thy master, thou, forever cursed!

Seyfried.

Surrender!

Ottokar.

Not thus tak'st thou Ottokar!

Let arms decide between us!

(He steps forward; his injured foot pains.)

Bear me, foot!

This is no time to smart. Make room for us!

Emerberg.

Lost art thou! Look! Thy army is in flight!

(Fleeing Bohemians are seen in the background.)

Ottokar.

Thou liest, no Bohemian flees! Away!

Seyfried and Emerberg (interposing their swords).

Stay!

(Heinrich von Lichtenstein, with his troops, in pursuit, hurries past, the Austrian banner in his hand.)

Lichtenstein.

The enemy flees! Hail Austria, hail!

Ottokar.

Stand, cowards, stand! And you, make room for me!

Seyfried.

Rest in thy tomb!

Ottokar (with a sword thrust).

This for Bohemia!

Seyfried (strikes back).

For Austria this!

Ottokar (strikes again).

And this for Ottokar!

Seyfried.

And this for Merenberg and for thy God!

(He strikes him down. Ottokar falls to the ground, rises again, totters, and drops dead at the foot of the hill.)

Emerberg.

What did'st thou do? The emperor's law is broken!

(Seyfried stands as if transfixed.)

(Enter Rudolph with his followers.)

Rudolph.

A truce to slaughter! Spare the vanquished foe!

What happened here? Why art thou turned to ice?

What, prostrate Ottokar? And bleeding—dead!

Thou did'st it! Flee, like him who first did kill!

And nevermore let me behold thy face!

(Merenberg flees.)

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Let the Bohemians homeward turn their steps!
Proclaim that he for whom they fought lies dead!
(Elizabeth, behind the scene.)

Elizabeth.

Help, help!

Rudolph.

Who calls?

Elizabeth (appears and throws herself at the emperor's feet).

O gracious emperor!

They're plundering yonder house, and burning it,
And spare no person, nay, not e'en the dead!
O save us, gracious lord!

Rudolph.

You shall find help.

Who are you?

Elizabeth.

I'm, alas! Queen Margaret's,
Of Austria, most faithful maid of honor,
And those men carry my poor lady's corpse.

(Four men, accompanied by women dressed in black, bring in the coffin.)

Rudolph.

Behold the body of your master there!

Elizabeth.

Good Lord, he died? Just as he gentle turned!
Poor master! Put the coffin over there,
Let them in death at least once more be joined!

(The coffin is placed at an elevation above Ottokar's head.)

(Enter the queen, behind her Zawisch and Bertha.)

Queen.

The king, 'tis rumored, is a prisoner.

Rudolph.

Here, woman, lies thy spouse.

(The queen, overcome by emotion, sinks down on her knees.

Zawisch remains standing, with bowed head.)

Rudolph.

At his wife's feet,

For she remained his wife, as proved her death.

Bertha (on the elevation behind the coffin, on which she leans with her elbow. She knocks on the coffin).

Open, Margaret, your husband has arrived!

(The chancellor, together with several prisoners, is brought in. He hurries to the spot.)

Chancellor.

My lord, O thou my erring, valiant lord!

(He puts Ottokar's head in his lap.)

Rudolph.

Here liest thou, stripped and unadorned, great king,

Thy head reposing in thy servant's lap,

And of thy wealth and splendor nought remains,

Not e'en a lonely beggar's coverlet,

To wrap thy body in, as in a shroud.

The emperor's mantle, which thy heart desired,

I take from me and spread here o'er thy corpse,

That as an emperor thou may'st be buried,

Who as a beggar didst this life depart.

Take him to Laa, and princely be his bier.

There may be rest in his ancestral tomb.

And God be merciful to him and all of us!

(He uncovers his head in silent prayer, all the others following his example. Kunigunde covers her face. Zawisch looks fixedly before him.)

Bertha (still leaning on the coffin lid).

Forgive our sins, as others we forgive!

Keep from temptation us!

Rudolph.

Temptation keep from us, Almighty Lord!

And now, my son, before this pallid face,

Before this corpse that was in life a king,

Bestow I Austria's fair lands on thee.

(He motions to his two sons to kneel down.)

Rudolph's prophetic forecast of the future greatness of Austria, joined to a solemn warning to his sons to remember in the days of their glory the fate of Ottokar, closes "König Ottokars Glück und Ende."

The ill fate which had attended the drama from the start pursued it after its appearance on the stage. "When the day of the first performance finally arrived," wrote Grillparzer, "there was a crush at the Burgtheater such as has not been seen there before or since. Unfortunately, I cannot claim that the public intended to honor me personally by crowding the house in this way; the truth is that the report that the play had been prohibited by the censor held out the prospect of a public scandal. But when everything passed off most innocently and loyally, and even the attempt to connect events of long ago with personages still living proved unsuccessful, the spectators found themselves partly disappointed in their expectations. There was tremendous applause, or rather, since the crush made hand-clapping impossible, there was immense cheering and stamping; but I felt instinctively that the play had failed to make a really deep impression. There was the same applause at every repeated performance; nevertheless, it seemed as if the play had somehow miscarried. Friends and acquaintances avoided me, as though dreading to talk about the latest dramatic event. The worst critics were the admirers of my 'Sappho'; they applied the same standards to both plays, utterly unmindful of the difference in the subjects. I finally kept away purposely from the few houses where I had hitherto been in the habit of visiting, in order not to be compelled

to answer again and again criticism based on entire ignorance of the subject."

The drama was destined to cause its author trouble of a more serious nature. That party spirit which is the bane of public life in Austria to-day was scarcely less fierce in its manifestations eighty years ago, and it seriously affected the fate of the play. The Czechs regard the career of King Ottokar as the culmination of Bohemia's national glory, and Grillparzer's treatment of their hero aroused their indignation. He received anonymous letters from Prague threatening his life, and the poet, who was conscious of no ill will toward the Czechs, and had merely intended to create an effective literary work, was deeply wounded. "I really know no longer what to do," he wrote in his diary. "Whatever I undertake encounters obstacles. Instead of meeting with recognition, I am held responsible for the follies of others." He was utterly disheartened, and despaired of ever writing another play. In his dejection he once more set out on a journey. He went to Germany, mainly to see Goethe.

VIII

GRILLPARZER'S VISIT IN WEIMAR

"THE great men of Germany," Grillparzer writes, "had practically all disappeared; but one was still living—Goethe, and the thought of speaking to him or at least seeing him made me happy in advance. I had never been, according to the fashion of those days, a blind worshipper of Goethe, or, for that matter, of any other poet. Goethe had since the death of Schiller turned from poetry to science. In thus scattering his efforts in too many directions, he lost in effectiveness throughout; his latest poetic productions were without warmth and point, and, when dealing with classic subjects, full of affectation. The lukewarmness of feeling which he thus imparted to the poets of his day has perhaps been the principal factor in the decay of poetry, inasmuch as it opened the door to all the barbarity of Young Germany, to folk songs and Middle-High-German nonsense. Nevertheless, Goethe is one of the greatest poets of all times and the real father of German poetry. Klopstock gave the first impulse to our poetry, Lessing pointed out the right road, Goethe has traversed it. Schiller may possibly prove a greater possession to the German nation; for every nation needs powerful and irresistible impressions, but Goethe seems to be the greater poet. He has an entire page to himself in the history of the development of the

human intellect, while Schiller stands midway between Racine and Shakespeare. Much as I disapproved of the latest activity of Goethe, and little as I hoped that he would pay any attention to the author of the 'Ahnfrau' and the 'Goldenes Vliess,' I still felt that the mere sight of him would infuse new courage into my soul. *Dormit puer, non mortuus est.*"

Grillparzer spent some time in Dresden and Berlin and met some of the most distinguished literary men of Germany, among them Tieck, Fouqué, Chamisso, and Varnhagen. He was most of all impressed by Varnhagen's wife, the brilliant Rahel. Grillparzer, who was never partial to literary women, writes about her as follows:

"Varnhagen accompanied me home. As we were passing his house, he said that he would like to make me acquainted with his wife—afterwards famous as Rahel—whom at that time I had scarcely heard of. I had wandered around all day and was utterly exhausted. I was therefore very glad when we were informed at the door that the Frau Legationsrätthin was not at home. But as we descended the stairs, she met us, and my fate was sealed. The more than middle-aged lady, bent by illness, who had probably never been pretty, in appearance somewhat like a supernatural being, not to say a witch, began to speak, and I was spellbound. My fatigue vanished instantly, or rather gave way to a sort of intoxication. She talked on until midnight, and I do not recollect whether I was finally told to go or went of my own accord. I have never heard anybody talk better and more interestingly."

Berlin, on the whole, he did not find altogether to his liking, although he was everywhere received with the con-

sideration due to his fame as a poet. "There was no lack of opportunity to become acquainted with those in high station. An effort was made to have me attend the teas given by one of the ministers—Herr Stägemann, I believe—but I declined, as I am not fond either of tea or of ministers. I was so often asked to call on Prince Wittgenstein, then at the head of the theatres, that I am inclined to think there was an intention of offering me a post in connection with the royal theatres. But I kept away from him, for while, as a rule, I am very willing to court the theatre, it is a charmer I do not dream of marrying. And, moreover, much as I admire Berlin, it could never have replaced Vienna in my affections. Aside from the natural beauties which surround the Austrian Kaiserstadt, Berlin has too much culture, just as Vienna has too little. And German culture has this peculiar characteristic, that it is too often dissociated from sound judgment and natural sentiment. Furthermore, the unanimity of all literary opinions was distasteful to me. I have often felt a genuine pleasure in Vienna when some one told me that he found Goethe dull or Shakespeare uncouth; not that I agreed with him, but it was pleasant to me not to be sure of the answer the moment I asked the question. In France, it is true, there exists, or existed until recently, the same unanimity; but in that country it proceeds from the national character, and answers, as it were, a normal need; while in Germany the opinions of literary coteries are forced upon the nation against its natural sentiment, as is apparent by the everlasting changes in these opinions."

The nearer Grillparzer approached Weimar, the heavier grew his heart, much as he wished to see Goethe. "My

opinion of my abilities, never very great, shrank step by step." On his arrival he secured a room at the "Elephant," an inn known throughout Germany, "the vestibule, as it were, to Weimar's Walhalla of living celebrities. I sent a waiter to Goethe with my card, asking whether I might be permitted to call on him. The waiter returned with the answer that the privy councillor was entertaining guests at his house, and could not see me just then; but that he expected me to tea in the evening. I dined at the inn. My card had made my name public; the fact of my arrival spread through the town, and there was no lack of callers.

"Toward evening I went to Goethe's house. I found in the parlor a good deal of company, all waiting for the privy councillor, who had not yet made his appearance. Among the persons assembled were the guests whom Goethe had invited that day for dinner: Councillor Jacob or Jacobs, with his young and beautiful daughter, as cultured as she was beautiful, the same who afterwards, under the name of Talvj, acquired literary fame. In talking with that charming girl, my embarrassment rapidly disappeared, and I almost forgot that I was in Goethe's house. Finally a side-door opened, and he entered. Dressed in black, with the decoration of a star on his breast, erect and almost stiff, he stepped among us, like a monarch about to give audience. He talked a few words to several of the guests and finally came to me, who was standing at the opposite end of the room. He asked me whether Italian literature was much studied in Austria. I answered, as was the case, that the study of the Italian language was very common, inasmuch as it was compulsory for all government employees. I added, however, that Italian literature was

completely neglected, and that it was the fashion to turn rather to English literature, which, with all its excellences, had an admixture of coarseness by no means beneficial, in my opinion, to the present state of German culture, more particularly to poetry. Whether he liked this remark or not, I cannot tell, but he probably did not, as he was just at that time in correspondence with Lord Byron. He left me, spoke to others, came back to me, talked about something I cannot now recall, left me again, and soon the company departed.

"I must confess that I returned to my hotel with a most unpleasant impression. Not that my vanity had been wounded; on the contrary, Goethe had treated me more politely and with more attention than I had expected. But to see the ideal of my youth, the poet of 'Faust,' 'Clavigo' and 'Egmont' as the stiff minister of state, who treated his guests with cold ceremoniousness, was indeed a rude awakening from my dreams. Had he insulted me and thrown me out-of-doors, I should perhaps have been better pleased. I was almost sorry I had come to Weimar.

"I concluded to devote the following day to seeing the sights of Weimar, and gave orders at the hotel for the post-chaise to be ready the day after. The next forenoon visitors of all sorts arrived, among them Chancellor Müller, a courteous and worthy man, and, first and foremost, my countryman Hummel, for the past few years musical director at Weimar. He had left Vienna before my dramatic productions had begun to attract attention, and we had never met before. It was almost touching to see with what joy this person, who in his general intercourse was undemonstrative to the point of dryness, greeted me. He



GRILLPARZER AT THE AGE OF
THIRTY-TWO

may partially have been moved by the recollection of his native city, which he had left with a heavy heart, or possibly it may have been the pleasure of finding that Weimar, where he usually heard only disparaging judgments of the Austrian intellect, could appreciate and honor one of his literary compatriots. And then he had at last an opportunity of talking Viennese with a person from Vienna—a dialect which, surrounded as he was by those who were strangers to it, he had retained in all its purity. Perhaps it was on account of this contrast that I thought I had never heard such poor German spoken in all my life. While we were planning to see some of the sights of Weimar, and just as Chancellor Müller, who may have noticed that I was rather depressed, assured me that Goethe's stiffness was entirely due to the embarrassment which he himself always experienced on meeting strangers for the first time, a waiter entered with a card from Goethe inviting me to take dinner with him on the following day. I was therefore compelled to prolong my stay, and recalled my order to get the horses ready for the morrow. I spent the forenoon in visiting places connected with the literary celebrities of the town. I was chiefly interested in Schiller's house, above all in the poet's study, an attic room on the second floor, where an old man, who is said to have been prompter at the theatre in Schiller's time, was teaching a little boy, Schiller's grandson, how to read. The frank, intellectual countenance of the boy made one cherish the illusion that perhaps another Schiller might some day emanate from that study—a hope which, however, was not destined to be realized.

"In the evening I went with Chancellor Müller to the

theatre, where an indifferent play was performed, with Graff in the cast, who was Schiller's first Wallenstein. I found him in no way remarkable, and when I was told that after that first performance Schiller rushed to the stage, embraced Graff and exclaimed: 'Now I understand my own Wallenstein!' I could not help thinking how much greater the great poet would have been had he found a real public and real actors.

"At last came the fateful day and the dinner-hour, and I went to Goethe's house. The other invited guests were already assembled; there were none but men present, as the amiable Talvj and her father had taken their departure the day after that evening party. Goethe's daughter-in-law was not in Weimar at that time, nor was her daughter, she who was destined to die so young. Both became subsequently much endeared to me. When I entered the room, Goethe stepped forward to meet me, and he was as pleasant and warm-hearted as he had previously been stiff and cold. My heart began to soften. And when dinner was ready, and the man who was to me the embodiment of German poetry — who at a distance, in his immeasurable superiority, had become in my eyes almost a legendary being—took my hand to conduct me into the dining-room, the boyish element in my nature overpowered me and I burst into tears. Goethe tried hard to cover up this exhibition of weakness. I sat next to him at the table, and he was, as the guests afterwards told me, gayer and more talkative than he had been in a long time. The conversation, to which he gave tone and animation, became general. Now and then he would direct his remarks to me in particular. What he talked about, however, barring a good

joke about Müllner's 'Mitternachtsblatt,' I do not recollect. Unfortunately, I did not write down my impressions of this visit at the time. . . . I remember only a very characteristic incident which occurred at the table. In the heat of discussion I plucked, as is an old habit of mine, at the piece of bread lying next to me, causing an accumulation of crumbs. Goethe gently put his finger on each one and made an orderly little heap of them. I noticed this only after some time, and then stopped.

"When I took leave of Goethe he asked me to call the next forenoon, in order to have my crayon portrait taken. It was his habit to have such portraits made, by a special artist, of all visitors who interested him. These drawings were put into a frame, which hung for this purpose in the visitors' room, and were changed every week in due rotation. I, too, enjoyed this honor.

"When I made my appearance in the forenoon the artist had not yet arrived. I was therefore told to join Goethe, who was walking up and down in his little garden. I now saw the reason for his stiff attitude in the presence of strangers. Old age was beginning to tell on him. As he paced to and fro, it was quite noticeable that the upper part of his body, especially his head and neck, bent forward. He was anxious to conceal this from strangers, hence his forcedly stiff bearing, which produced a disagreeable impression. There was something indescribably touching in the way he appeared now, clad in a long loose coat, a little brimmed cap upon his white hair. He looked half a king, half a patriarch. We talked while walking back and forth. He mentioned my 'Sappho,' which he seemed to like—a species of self-praise, as it were, for had

I not worked with his tools? When I complained of my solitary position in Vienna, he said—what he has since expressed in print—that a man can do his work only in the society of his equals or of those who have at least similar tastes. If he and Schiller accomplished what the world gave them credit for, it was largely because of their interaction, so stimulating and mutually helpful. While we were talking, the artist arrived. We went into the house and he began to sketch me. Goethe had gone into his room, out of which he stepped from time to time, to see how the portrait progressed. He was well satisfied with it after its completion. After the painter left, Goethe had his son bring in some choice specimens of his varied treasures. There was his correspondence with Lord Byron; everything relating to his meeting with the empress and the emperor of Austria in Carlsbad, and finally the Imperial Austrian patent prohibiting the reprint of his collected works. He seemed to take especial pride in the last-named object, either because he approved of the conservative attitude of Austria or else because he looked upon the imperial license granted him as a curiosity, in view of what usually happened in the literary world of Austria. All these treasures were, in semi-Oriental fashion, wrapped each in a silken cloth, and Goethe evidently regarded them with a sort of reverence. He finally took leave of me in the kindest possible manner.

“In the course of the day Chancellor Müller asked me to visit Goethe again toward evening. He said I would find him alone, and that he would by no means be displeased to see me. It did not occur to me until later that Müller could not have said all this without Goethe’s knowledge.

"And now I committed my second Weimar folly. I was afraid to spend an entire evening alone with Goethe, and after considerable doubt and vacillation did not go to his house. There were several reasons for my fear. First of all it seemed to me that I had nothing to talk about that would interest Goethe. My own works I learned to appreciate only later on, in comparison with those of my contemporaries; as measured by the standard of what preceded them, particularly here, in the home of German poetry, my productions appeared to me exceedingly crude and insignificant. Moreover, I have said that I had left Vienna with a feeling that my poetic talent was utterly exhausted—a feeling which increased in Weimar to the point of actual dejection. It therefore seemed to me rather contemptible to indulge in jeremiads in the presence of Goethe, and to be obliged to accept his empty consolations.

"In all this nonsense there was nevertheless a grain of sense. I was aware of the aversion Goethe then felt toward everything violent and forced. It seemed to me, however, that repose and moderation were suited only to one capable of creating such stupendous works as 'Iphigenie' and 'Tasso'; but that it was incumbent upon everybody to bring out those qualities in which lay his real strength. These qualities were in my case warmth of sentiment, feeling, and power of imagination. Looking at matters impartially, I felt far too weak to defend myself against him, while giving my reasons for dissenting from his own views; at the same time my veneration for him was far too great to permit me to listen to his opinions either with pretended approval or in deceitful silence.

"Be this as it may, the fact is that I did not pay the

visit, and that Goethe was displeased. He may well have been surprised that I neglected, with such apparent indifference, the opportunity of getting light on my productions as well as on myself. Possibly he had an inkling of the truth—namely, that in the author of the ‘Ahnfrau’ there still lingered a predilection for similar poetic outbursts, so utterly distasteful to him. He may also have divined my frame of mind and come to the conclusion that unmanliness of character was bound to ruin even a great talent. He certainly was from that time on much cooler toward me.

“As regards what I call unmanliness, I have to own, as I have owned before, to a certain weakness when confronted with petty or difficult circumstances, especially such as have called for the display of charity, reverence, and gratitude. Whatever was repugnant to me, or appeared to me positively bad, I have always rejected outright; and in remaining true to my convictions, I have ever shown a firmness amounting to obstinacy; but, speaking generally, it is true enough that only from the union of character and talent proceeds what is called genius.

“While in Weimar I was summoned to meet the Grand Duke, whom I found at the so-called Roman House, and who was as simple and natural as he is always described. He talked with me for more than an hour, and seemed to be interested in my account of Austrian conditions. Not he, but most of the others, let me see that it was their desire to capture me for the Weimar theatre—a desire which did not suit my own inclinations.

“When, on the fourth day of my stay, I took leave of Goethe, he was friendly, but considerably more reserved.

He was surprised to hear that I intended to leave Weimar so soon, and added that they would all be glad to hear from me. It was then 'they,' in the plural, not he. And he subsequently never did me justice, considering that, all in all—in spite of the difference in degree—I may consider myself the foremost writer that has appeared since his day and Schiller's. But I need not say that all this did not diminish my love and respect for him."

In reality Goethe was very favorably impressed with Grillparzer, and in a letter to his friend Zelter he spoke of his "undoubted poetic talent." Refreshed and stimulated by his journey, Grillparzer returned to Vienna resolved to begin at once work on another drama, which, instead of entering upon "a wearisome correspondence" with him, he intended to dedicate to Goethe. Perhaps for the only time in his life he was full of energy. "I had outlined a number of plots, all thought out, and finished as to construction, even down to details, although nothing had as yet been committed to paper. I was to take up these plots consecutively, write each year a play, and abandon forever my hypochondriacal musing."

IX

EIN TREUER DIENER SEINES HERREN

GRILLPARZER naturally selected for his next drama a plot which was less likely to meet with obstacles on the part of the censor than his last. Asked by the court to produce a play for the coronation of the Empress Caroline Augusta of Austria as queen of Hungary, in September, 1825, he bethought himself of an incident in the life of Bankban, a military governor during the reign of the Hungarian king Andrew II., in the thirteenth century. Bankban's wife was seduced by the queen's brother, and a revolt ensued. The Hungarian dramatist Katona had written in 1816 a drama founded on this incident, and there exists an old German play, by the poet-cobbler Hans Sachs, on the same subject. Grillparzer departed widely from both his predecessors in planning his work. Katona's main object was to depict the struggles between Magyars and Germans. These play but an insignificant part in Grillparzer's tragedy, whose main purpose is the exaltation of loyalty, of absolute devotion to duty. In the two older plays the governor kills the queen, who has connived at the misdeeds of her brother. In Grillparzer's play her guilt is lessened, and she falls a victim to an accident. Bankban's character is completely transformed and assumes heroic proportions. There is a certain resemblance between the Bankban of Grillparzer and Lamberto,

the hero of Lope de Vega's "Grandduke of Moscow." Lamberto carries his devotion to his prince even to the point of willingly sacrificing to him his own son; but Bankban's sense of duty is dramatically much more effective.

Although Grillparzer came to the conclusion that his subject was unsuited to the occasion, he finished the play. It was performed on the 28th of February, 1828, under the title of "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn" (A Faithful Servant of his Master), and met with an enthusiastic reception. But again ill-luck pursued him. The day after the first performance, the president of the police, Count Sedlnitzky, sent for him and told him, with some embarrassment, that the emperor had enjoyed the play so much that he wished to become exclusive owner of the manuscript. His Majesty was willing to compensate him for any pecuniary loss resulting from the withdrawal of the work from the stage. Grillparzer replied without hesitation that he was not contemptible enough to allow his play to vanish from the earth for any pecuniary inducement. The result of the interview* was that the play, after a few performances, was withdrawn from the Burgtheater, not to be revived until thirty years later.

"Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn" is in some respects perhaps the most remarkable of Grillparzer's dramas. No other bears so distinct an impress of his personality;

*There is on record a letter of Grillparzer's written to Count Sedlnitzky after their interview, in which the poet, doubtless thinking it prudent to soften the asperity of his spoken refusal, named, under protest, what he thought a prohibitory price for the withdrawal of the play—3000 florins (probably in paper money, or about \$600). The letter was never answered.

none affords so clear an insight into his moral nature. There was much in it to make it appear revolutionary in the eyes of the emperor, while the critics denounced it as the apotheosis of servility.

Bankban, like Kent in "King Lear," "serves him truly that will put him in trust," but his attachment is far nobler, for it is impersonal. He serves the state, and his highest duty is faithfulness to his sacred trust. An old man of sixty, he has promised his king, who leaves Hungary, in order to quell a rebellion in Galicia, to be a true adviser to the queen, watch over her and her infant son, and preserve peace in the land. The king holds out no reward to him, but says:

. . . If I return
And find my country's peaceful state disturbed,
I shall not punish thee, but merely shun,
And when thou diest may thy grave proclaim:
"Age bent his frame, but could not tame his will.
He was a Magyar and forgot his trust,
He was a man and did not keep his oath"—
But that shall never be, I know, I know.

Bankban, simple, pedantic, quaint in speech and manner, full of fatherly affection for his young wife, is at once a type of Austrian officialdom and the personification of Kant's categorical imperative. He has the nobility, but not the wisdom, of Lessing's Nathan. His conception of duty, however, which implies the complete conquest of self, and which only a shortsighted criticism could mistake for servile self-obliteration, is perhaps the highest depicted in literature.

Bankban reposes absolute confidence in his wife, Erny,

and she returns his affection as one who looks up to him as "man, father, husband." Opposed to the heroic simplicity of the Palatine Bankban is the profligate character of Duke Otto von Meran, the queen's brother, who pursues Erny in mad lust—half passion, half revengeful desire to humble her pride. The subtlest traits reveal to us at the very opening of the play the disparity of temperament, as well as of age, between Bankban and Erny.

The scene is a drawing-room in Bankban's house, with high-arched windows and unpretentious mediæval furniture. It is before the dawn of day, and there are lights upon the table. Bankban stands near the table; two servants are busy dressing him. One holds his cloak, the other, kneeling, fastens on his spurs.

(From the street resounds, amid laughter and handclapping, a loud cry.)

Bankban! Ho, Bankban!

Bankban.

The spur here pinches!

Servant.

O, my lord!

Bankban.

What folly!

Go, fasten it still tighter! Stop! Hold back!

Servant.

I don't know what to do.

Bankban.

So much the worse.

Servant.

The noise—

Bankban.

What noise?

Servant.

The noise there in the street—

Bankban.

Why mind the street? Do here as thou art bid!
Let each man look but to his proper business,
And let those follow suit who are inclined.

(Song in the street, accompanied by a guitar.)

"Old man, young wife—
What means such life?
If he be wise,
He shuts his eyes."

Many voices (amid shouts and laughter).

Bankban! Ho, Bankban!

Servant.

May poison and the plague—

Bankban (who has tied his belt around his waist).

And now the sabre!

Servant.

O would you then, my lord—

Bankban.

What?

Servant.

Draw your sabre!

We all shall, after you, dash through the door
Into the jeering mob, and scatter them,
Until the last has fled.

Bankban.

Art thou so full of war?

I shall procure for thee a place in the army.
This is the home of peace. I am its lodger,
Its guest, and hold this place by sufferance.
The Lord forbid that I create disturbance,
And prematurely lose my dwelling place.
Let fools enjoy their noise; hand me the sabre!

(He fastens it to his belt.)

The Magyar's armed in war, in peace as well,
 Though sore need only can his sword compel;
 And as the husband, true in distant land,
 Strips not his wedding ring from off his hand,
 So shall proclaim this sword, remote from thought of strife,
 The Magyar's linked to danger as man is linked to wife.
 Be troubled not, and go!

Servant.

O look, my lord!

Stones do they throw and sand against your window.

Bankban.

Then open it, for window panes are costly;
 When open, what is thrown can do no harm.
 Hand me my hat! I hurry to the castle.
 The king is to depart before the dawn of day.
 What is the time?

Servant.

The clock is four.

Bankban.

High time!

Look for thy mistress, thou!

Another Servant (standing at the window).

There stand they, all.

Bankban.

Then let them stand!

Servant.

Among them is the prince!

Bankban.

The prince, thou say'st!

Servant.

With my own eyes I've seen him.

Bankban (with half-drawn sabre).

Thou, seen him? Scoundrel! Had my own eyes seen him,
 I should believe that waking I had dreamed,
 Rather than that my sovereign's brother erred.
 Be gone!—Must I thus rave like one demented,

And scold? By all that's mad and void of sense!
 I, councillor of the king! Fine councillor I!
 I better were away at Farkahegy,
 A mound of stones upon me. But I'm rambling—
 Go, say I, go! I shall not further talk.
(A female servant brings a goblet.)

What bring'st thou?

Servant.

Gracious sir, the morning draught.

Bankban.

Put down the goblet. Is my wife awake?

Servant.

Yes, sir, indeed!

Bankban.

Is she? Why comes she not?
 Twice yes is "yes, indeed!" If twice awake,
 She ought at least to come a single time.
 "Yes, sir, indeed!" Save me from all such talk!
 Next time say simply, "yes." But now speak thou,
 Why comes she not?

Servant.

I was to ask, my lord,
 If you permitted her—

Bankban.

I do surrender!
 For silliness infects, I see, like fever.
 If I permitted, asks she? O good God!
 Must I permit who never have refused?

(Erny appears at the door.)

Welcome, my Erny! But how strange thy message!
 Didst through the chamberlain thou ask admission?
 I am not fond of innovations, child;
 Therefore, I pray, spare me such novel customs.

Erny.

You are not angry?

Bankban.

Angry, why?—Thou mean'st—
The street below is common property.
We did not ask them, nor, considered rightly,
Could we prevent their doing what they did;
Though it is scarce well-mannered to disturb
By song at early dawn those still asleep.

Erny.

And know you, also, who—

Bankban.

I do not care to know.

Erny.

The prince, so Gertrude says—

Bankban.

So be it then.

My lord has leisure, let him please his fancy.

(Song, out in the street.)

"Erny fair, good and sweet,
Know'st thou not youth is fleet?
When thy hand gav'st away,
Winter was wed to May."

Many voices.

Bankban! ho, Bankban!

Bankban (who during the singing has taken the goblet and emptied it).

False sings the middle one, nor heeds he time.

A pity 'tis. Bad song spoils purest voice.

Erny.

O, the disgrace and shame!

Bankban.

For whom, dear child?

I know but one disgrace upon this earth,

And that is, to do wrong.

Erny, while aroused to indignation by the gossip and the taunts of the followers of the duke, and distrustful of

his talk, is not wholly displeased by the attentions of one so high in station and so attractive in personal appearance. He makes no secret, in speaking to his attendants, of his defiance of all moral restraints in courting Erny.

Otto.

Is not my sister queen here in this land?

Why should I care for custom and for morals?

My aim was merely to excite his anger.

He spoils my pleasure in my quest for game.

* * * * *

I shall still rouse his ire, who seems to mock

My wooing by his bold security.

What else may come I take as added spice.

Bankban, immersed in his official duties, asks Erny to join in the court festivities she fain would shun; for Otto's importunities are growing more and more urgent. And when she confides to him her dread of the prince, and begs for protection against her own weakness, which almost led her to write him a letter (if only to give an innocent explanation); when, finally, she is about to throw herself at Bankban's feet, protesting her innocence, and yet begging forgiveness for her indiscretion, his tender refusal to find her guilty of any wrongdoing is expressed in words of touching simplicity:

Erny.

I cannot bear it. Fiercely burns the leaf,

The wicked leaf, upon my guilty breast.

(She throws the paper from her.)

Away!

(To Bankban, who has picked it up.)

Destroy and tear it into shreds!

Let no one, no one, know what it contains!

Bankban (*unfolding it*).

What holds it then? 'Tis empty!

Erny.

Empty! O!

Hell's characters are graven on this leaf.

Bankban.

It may be so, though God alone can read them,
Besides the one that thought, but did not write.
Here, take thy leaf!

Erny.

Not I, Bankban, not I!

Upon this leaf I meant to write the prince.

Bankban.

The Lord forbid!

Erny.

And would have done it, too.

Bankban.

The queen, it may be, eager is to learn
About the strife. I shall report the issue.

Erny.

And will you leave me here alone, O Bankban?
Will you not punish, then, your wife, not guard her?

Bankban.

Say'st punish, thou, and guard? Tell me yourself
How shall I do it? Take thee furious home,
And lock thee closely in a secret chamber,
Behind a gate and fence and bar and bolt?
Import me eunuchs from the land of Moors,
Who mute and thousand-eyed shall guard my wife?
Shall I at night, the lantern in my hand,
Slink to the gate and see if it be closed?
A woman's honor is a granite wall:
Who undermines it, cleaves the living rock.

Erny.

Too hard, too hard, it is, Bankban, my husband!

Bankban.

It may be I'm too old, and thou art young,
 I, tired of life and serious, blooming, thou.
 What right then have I thus to torture thee?
 Because thou promised'st me? Ah, much we promise!
 Because 'tis custom? Who still honors custom?
 If in thy heart there lives not calm content,
 A voice therein speaks whispering not to thee:
 That man is kind, and honest is his purpose,
 He loves as no one loves me, and in him
 Alone I trust—if thus speaks not the voice,
 Then God help, Erny, thee and all of us!

* * * * * *

What dost thou do? Thou, Erny, kneel and plead?
 Thy word be yes or no. If guiltless, stand
 Before me and say simply, "Here I am,
 Thy sinless wife," and look into my eye.
 No, no, not down I mean, my child, at me
 Look straight. But tears obscure thy eyes, dear wife!
 'Twas not within my thought thus to reprove.
 Draw close to me, and nestle to my heart,
 And all thou knowest whisper to it low.
 My heart will hear thee, and it will forgive.

Those who are familiar with the darker chapters in the recent history of Austrian princes may read in Duke Otto's description of court-life an almost prophetic forecast of actual conditions:

You call me bad, and bad I was and am,
 Born on that hapless height where slaves abide
 And sycophants, and men are never seen.
 By flattery surrounded and upheld,
 The toy of whim, tossed back and forth at will,
 I plunged into the maddening whirl of life.
 If bad I was, I might have been still worse,
 If bad was all I taught, who taught me good?

When Bankban's duty to his king is put to the supreme test, when Erny plunges the dagger into her breast to escape Otto's frenzied pursuit, and Bankban kneels down beside her body, he compresses his woe into the single exclamation:

"O Erny, O my child, my sweet and gentle child!"

and he thinks only of his pledge to keep peace in the land. He rescues the wretch, who has robbed him of his all, from the avenging hands of the furious populace; for to the duke, after the accidental death of the queen, is entrusted the care of her little son, who must be safely delivered into the hands of the king on his return, as the faithful servant had solemnly promised to do. The almost superhuman emotions struggling in Bankban's breast find expression in that extraordinary scene where he leads the little prince Bela out into the open country, the wretched duke following barefoot and in rags. Bankban turns to speak to him, and the alternate accents of heart-broken grief, wild denunciation of the murderer, and respectful deference due to his rank, are truly Shakespearean in their realism and power.

Do you dare touch this child? Ah, yes; well, Duke,
Take here this cloth and gently dry his foot,
And where it bleeds, be sure you spare the wound.
Thou bloody murderer, would I were young,
And not so weak, thou shouldst not touch the boy!
And yet, thou cursed man, thou'rt Heaven-sent,
And therefore, Duke, now listen to my words.

And when his mission is ended, and the king desires to reward him, he interrupts him with these words:

. . . No more, my lord,
 My days are numbered, let me wait in peace
 Till death shall come. Reward me, dost thou say?
 I now may bear my sorrow free from guise,
 My sorrow for my wife; now may I turn
 And read, alas! my answer in each eye;
 For she was innocent and just—reward enough.

It is a curious satire on criticism that the wiseacres of the Vienna journals in Grillparzer's day should have found a servile spirit in a play ending in the following lines addressed by Bankban to royalty, as he kneels before the boy who is to occupy the throne:

Be gentle, princely child, and be thou just!
 For but the just are blessed by the Lord.
 Learn to restrain thyself, for self-restraint
 Alone can guide the curbing reins of law;
 Know e'er that men are human, and respect
 Thy servant as a precious gift in need.
 Remember as a man that when a child
 Thou layest helpless in a murderer's arms;
 And when rebellion clamored at the gate,
 And far was help, and counsel there was none,
 Then did an old man what his strength allowed,
 An old man, faithful servant of his lord.

No dramatist was freer than Grillparzer from the tendency to subordinate æsthetic to moral considerations. Victor Hugo's dictum that the drama must "teach and civilize" was considered by him valid only if the lesson is enforced secondarily and indirectly. He ridiculed "those profound Germans who, face to face with the productions of genius, ask, as did the French mathematician who listened to a play of Racine: 'It is all very well, but what

does it prove?" But Grillparzer knew also, much better than his shallow critics, the overwhelming value, æsthetically as well as morally, of complete surrender to an ideal. "In the wars of the French Revolution," he said, "the self-sacrifice of the Vendéans was as inspiring as the enthusiasm of the Republicans," and judged from this point of view, Bankban's devotion to duty is its own explanation and hence its own reward. As we recognize in the truest poetry the poet himself, so we find in Bankban, the most unique character created by Grillparzer, a manifestation of some of his deepest traits. Bankban's uncompromising determination to preserve at any price order within the state is the expression of Grillparzer's own political creed, and explains his attitude toward the revolution of 1848. "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn" is, however, as Ehrhard has pointed out, inherently and not through the character of Bankban alone, one of the most striking of Grillparzer's works. Just as in writing "Otto-kar" the author departed widely from the dramatic principles that had guided him in the composition of "Sappho" and "The Golden Fleece"—themselves a protest against his "Ahnfrau"—so in writing "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn," he once more struck out in entirely new paths. For the first time the influence of Lope de Vega on his genius becomes apparent; but Grillparzer's poetic self-restraint achieves a triumph such as the great Spaniard, in the unbridled exuberance of his fancy, rarely attained. "The Austrian poet," says Ehrhard, "never forgets the sound principles drawn from the study of the Greeks. His personages have more solidity and logic than those of the Spanish master. One might be tempted to believe that

the thread that guides the author through the labyrinth of a nature so changeable and full of surprises as that of Otto must escape him, and with it the logical consistency of the character. But the fear is groundless. The poet leads Otto through all his vicissitudes and incoherences without losing sight of his real nature. While breaking with all conventionalities, he remains true to the supreme law of art. Otto von Meran has in him nothing of the conventional types of the stage. He is no Don Juan, nor is he the Prince of Guastalla of Lessing, any more than Erny is Emilia Galotti, in spite of the similarity of the situations. He is the most perfect of the characters which Grillparzer created on the model of those of Lope de Vega, or rather on the model of Nature, whom he knew how to portray in all her caprices and vagaries. It is the creation of a poet who could become a thoroughgoing realist without ceasing to be a poet."

The popular success of his tragedy could not restore to its author the peace of mind which had fled from him even before its completion. He believed that the choice of his subject was a mistake, that the play was "much too crude and violent," and he therefore considered it unfit to be dedicated to Goethe, contrary to his original purpose. After handing the manuscript to the director of the Burgtheater, he wrote in his diary: "I feel that my strength is deserting me. I am weary and heartsick unto death." And in this state of mental depression he had to face the hostility of the bureaucracy toward him, which was but intensified by the impression which his latest play produced on the public.

X

OFFICIAL PERSECUTION

DREARY years of tribulations in office followed. Count Stadion, Grillparzer's enlightened chief and patron, was dead, and the new minister of finance, though considerate to every one else, conceived, as the hypochondriacal poet thought, a peculiar dislike toward him. Even certain small perquisites of office, justly due him, were withheld from him, ostensibly because his loyalty was not above suspicion. He was reproached with having been a member of the Ludlams-Höhle, a harmless society of literary men, musicians and artists, which several years previously had acquired a certain mysterious celebrity, inasmuch as at its gatherings the assembled wits were supposed to vent their indignation, even if in cautiously veiled language, against the powers in church and state. The director of the Vienna police, anxious to ingratiate himself with his superiors, one day dispersed the gathering and confiscated all the documents found at the festive board. The next morning policemen appeared in the private rooms of the members, seized all their papers, and placed the inmates under arrest. For twenty-four hours Grillparzer was not even allowed to eat his meals without police supervision. Although the higher authorities were made to see the absurdity of the police director's zeal, and cancelled the sentence pronounced by him against the pub-

lic officials who were among the members of the Ludlams-Höhle, Grillparzer remained for years a marked man in the eyes of his superiors. He even incurred the ill-will of the emperor himself, through an incident which he relates as follows:

"My devotion to Austria was part of my very being. Aside from the hold which patriotism has on every normal person, I had a decided predilection for the ingenuous, gay, and highly sensitive, if rather untutored, nature of the Austrians. And on that account I have never felt thoroughly at home in Germany. My love of country I transferred only too easily to the reigning family, as its representative. Little reason as I had hitherto had to be grateful to any member of that family, I was exceedingly slow in condemning any one of them. About that time the crown prince, afterwards Emperor Ferdinand, was dangerously ill. Public opinion concerning this young prince was divided. Some thought him a person of very slender ability, while others judged from his silence, whenever the council of state deliberated upon unpopular public measures, that his sentiments were more in accord with those of the people. All, however, were agreed as to his innate kindness of heart. During his severe illness I gave vent to my fears and hopes in a few stanzas, according to my habit of turning to lyric poetry as a means of relieving my feelings—a practice, I admit, which scarcely entitles me to be considered a true lyric poet.

"The burden of the poem was that only the future, as was true enough, could reveal the mental endowment of the prince; for the present we were happy to know that he possessed in the highest degree that quality which, above all

others, adorns man. I mean goodness, which in its most perfect expression is a form of wisdom in itself.

"I was well aware that this phrase was liable to misinterpretation; but I wrote the poem merely to please myself, and did not dream of publishing it. When it lay finished on my writing table, a friend called on me who, without being literary himself, was in touch with all the literary men of Vienna. I happened to be called away, and he in the meantime read, rather indiscreetly, the poem which had caught his eye. He was delighted with it, perhaps just because it was within the bounds of truth, and he expressed himself to this effect in speaking about it to his literary friends. They asked to see it, and I offered no objection. I read it aloud in the evening at the restaurant where we had a room of our own, and I was urged by all, particularly by the editor of a certain Vienna periodical, to have it printed. My fears of a possible misinterpretation were calmed by the unanimous approval of so many able men; moreover, I knew that the poem had to be submitted to the censor, who, if he found anything obnoxious in it, would be sure to prohibit it. It was therefore agreed that the editor of the periodical in question was to hand the poem to the censor—well known to each of us—not officially, but merely in a friendly way, and to take it back in case he objected to it. The censor, himself a poet and at one time director of a theatre, said that he was not able to give his sanction to the publication of the poem. But when the editor asked him to return it, he replied that this was opposed to his sense of duty, and that he felt obliged to submit it to the higher authorities. Whether he acted from a stupid desire to get the poem into print or from mere

rascality, I do not know. At all events, permission to print the poem was refused, and at the same time it was spread broadcast in countless written copies. The very persons who thought ill of the prince saw in my verses a wilful intention to ridicule him, while mercenary scoundrels attacked me and my poem in wretched doggerel, likewise widely distributed in written copies. Thus was engendered a veritable literary revolt against the dynasty."

The literary merits of the poem are no greater than those of similar effusions addressed by Goethe to the princely personages whom he had to welcome in his semi-official capacity, and we must take Grillparzer's word as to the loyal impulse which prompted it; but it cannot cause surprise that neither emperor nor crown prince quite relished the compliment implied in the lines:

"Mag sein, dass höchster Geistesgaben Fülle
Dereinst umleuchtet deinen Fürstenthut;
Wir forschen nicht, was Zukunft erst enthülle,
Des Einen sicher jetzt schon: dass du gut."

(Perhaps in thee a lordly mind reposes,
By wisdom crowned some day thy figure shines;
We care not what the time to come discloses,
Content that goodness now thy heart enshrines.)

When Grillparzer sought an audience of the emperor, and urged his claim to a modest addition to his salary, Francis told him that his request was an entirely reasonable one; but he quietly filed his petition away among the papers which were not to be acted upon during his lifetime, and there it was found after his death. The crown prince Ferdinand, as he told an acquaintance of Grillparzer, bore him long a decided grudge for his ill-starred poem.

XI

DES MEERES UND DER LIEBE WELLEN

THE fate of Grillparzer's verses reinforced the lesson taught him by the reception of "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn," that it was dangerous in Austria to make poetic use of historic subjects. He turned once more to the ancients for a dramatic theme, and found it in the legend of Hero and Leander. He had considered the subject, which had become familiar to him through the poem of the Greek grammarian Musæus and Schiller's ballad, as early as 1819, immediately after the success of his "Sappho," and he brought to the execution of his plan in 1830 the full maturity of his powers. "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen" (The Waves of the Sea and of Love) is the most beautiful love drama in German literature and is perhaps the only one in all literature that can be classed with "Romeo and Juliet."

The play was first performed at the Burgtheater on the 5th of April, 1831. "It met with no favor," is the laconic entry in the author's diary. He had put his hope mainly on the fourth act, which fell flat, and he modestly remarks: "If I can succeed by a few good plays in retaining my place among poets who are to live, the time may come when the value of what I accomplished, even if only partially, in that fourth act will be recognized," adding: "Had I succeeded in the task I set myself, poetry

would have gained a treasure." Posterity has removed all doubt as to his success.

Grillparzer lent to Hero some of the traits of a woman who was long the object of his passionate devotion, Marie Daffinger—"a truly divine beauty," he calls her—and, as in most of his dramas, there are autobiographic touches in some of the other characters in the play. Hero, in contrast with Shakespeare's Juliet, outranks her lover in dramatic importance and psychological depth. She is the most perfect and most charming of all of Grillparzer's heroines.

The scene is at Sestos, on the Hellespont. At the opening of the first act Hero is busy adorning the temple of Aphrodite, whose priestess she is to become that very day. Ianthe, her attendant, gay as Hero is serious, speaks of the two strange youths whom both had noticed at the gate, and is chided for her levity. The priest, Hero's uncle, tells her that her parents, from whom she has long been estranged, have come to see her and to enjoy her proud distinction. The mother would fain take Hero back to her home and see her fulfil woman's destiny as wife and mother, though her own lot, by the side of a low-minded husband, has been unhappy. The conversation is interrupted by the commotion caused by the capture of a nesting pigeon, which has trespassed upon the spot sacred to universal celibacy, as the priest explains:

No bird builds near the temple here his nest,
Nor in this grove shall pigeons coo unpunished;
The creeping vine shall cling not to the elm.
Whate'er lives as a pair, avoid this house!
And she there from this day bows to this law.

Hero persuades her mother to look without misgivings

upon the festivities that are about to begin. As the multitude advances, the two strangers once more appear and place themselves near the altar. Hero sees them and is seized with confusion as she utters the formula that seals her fate.

In the second act we find Leander, the melancholy fisherman of Abydos, listening languidly to the eloquent story of jovial Naukleros, who seeks, by his glowing description of Hero's charms, to dispel his friend's gloom, and to convince him that he is in love with her.

Hero (carrying a pitcher on her head, and holding another in her right hand. She sings.)

"Gently she strokes
The plumage soft—"

(She stops and speaks.)

My uncle thinks I must not sing the song
Of Leda and the Swan.

(She resumes her walk.)

How can it harm?

(As she reaches the centre of the stage, Leander suddenly jumps forward, with bowed head, and throws himself at her feet.)

Hero.

Ye gods, what is this? O how frightened am I!
My knees do tremble, scarce I hold the pitcher.

(She sets the pitchers down.)

A man! Another! Why, strange men, intrude you?
Why seek the priestess in this sacred grove?
Not unprotected am I, not unguarded.
If I but raise my voice, the guards approach,
And make you sore repent your rash intrusion.
Go then while it is time; your punishment
Be knowing that you sinned, and sinned in vain.

Naukleros.

O maiden, we came not to do thee harm,

But seeking cure for deeply hidden woe
That seized upon the friend whom there thou seest.
Ill is that man.

Hero.

Why dost thou speak to me?
The priests' advice seek in Apollo's temple,
They heal the sick.

Naukleros.

Not sickness such as his,
Which seized him in this temple at this feast,
And leaves him only at this very spot.

Hero.

Mean'st thou to-day's feast?

Naukleros.

Yes, thy eyes he feasts on.

Hero.

Is such your meaning, such your bold intent?
But well I know how low the vulgar crowd,
Without a sense of shame, of reverence void.
I go, and call attendants, who are near,
To fetch the pitchers. They, if still you linger,
Shall tell you both how serious your offence.

Naukleros.

Not thus depart! Cast first a glance at him,
The youth whom sorely wounds thy ruthless speech.

Leander (looking up to her).

O stay!

Hero.

Thou art the youth, I now remember,
Who at Hymenæos' altar knelt to-day.
Thou then didst gentle seem and reverential,
And sorry am I now to find thee changed.

Leander (who has risen).

Not changed! O stay!

Hero (to Naukleros).

What is this man's intent?

Naukleros.

He feasts, I said, on every look of thine,
And death and life is every word thou speak'st.

Hero.

Thou hast been ill advised, thou gentle youth,
And from the proper path has strayed thy mind.
For if most leniently I were to judge,
It still would seem thy thought does favor me.
But I am priestess in the goddess' shrine,
And am unwedded, as my vow commands.
Nor is it safe to think of wooing me,
For death is his who makes the rash attempt.
Therefore leave me my pitcher, and depart;
I should be sorry if you met with harm.

Leander.

O let the ocean's depth be then my grave!

Hero.

Poor wretched man! My heart feels deeply for thee!

Naukleros.

By pity, priestess, not alone be swayed,
Reach out a helping hand to him who loves thee.

Hero.

What can I do? Thou know'st all I can say.

Naukleros.

Give him at least a single healing word.
Come here! The bush keeps off the spying eye.
I place thy pitcher near thee in the shade.
Come then, and vouchsafe us a single word.
Wilt thou not sit here?

Hero.

'Tis not meet to do so.

Naukleros.

Do it from pity for the suffering youth!

Hero (to Leander).

Then sit thee, too.

Naukleros.

Yes, here, and near him thou.

Hero (to Naukleros).

I said before, and say it now again:
No man there breathes may think of wooing me,
For to live husbandless requires my office.
Had you come yesterday, I was still free;
To-day I vowed, and I shall keep my vow.

(To Leander.)

Shade not thy eyes with sorrowing hand, O youth!
No, leave this grove with courage unimpaired;
Bestow thy glance upon another maid,
And sun thee in a favor here denied.

Leander (jumping up).

May I be swallowed by the gaping earth,
May from me turn whate'er is good and fair,
If ever other woman, other love—

Hero (who has also risen, to Naukleros).

Tell him to speak not thus! What boots it him?
What boots it me? Why thus torment one's self?
He is so fair, so youthful, and so kind,
I wish him every joy and happiness.
Let him go home.

Leander.

Home, I! Here I take root,
And as these trees stand here by night and day,
So shall I stand and toward the temple gaze.

Hero.

The guardians of this place will seize and harm him,
Tell him!

(To Leander.)

And if, kind youth, thou homeward go'st,
Let life's swift changes and its varied cares
Blot out as much of this as was too much,
While thou preserv'st the rest. And so shall I.
And when next year, and every following year,

Returns the feast we celebrate to-day,
Come thou again, and in the temple stand,
That I may see thee, glad if quiet thou.

Leander (throwing himself at her feet).

O maid divine!

Hero.

Not thus! It is not proper.

And see! My uncle comes. He will reprove me,
And justly so. Why did I yield to thee?

Naukleros.

Hand me thy pitcher, and I'll drink from it,
Thus giving good account of what took place.

Leander (pushing him aside).

Not thou! I, I!

Hero (holding out the pitcher to him, from which he drinks kneeling).

Drink then, and every drop

Give comfort thee, and give thee happiness.

Hero tells the priest, who arrives upon the scene, that Leander is ill, and is rebuked for allowing him to remain within the sacred precincts. The feast is over, and strangers found near the temple after sundown are harshly dealt with. They depart, Leander being determined to return.

The scene of the third act is in the tower, henceforth Hero's dwelling place. The priest points out to her all its sacerdotal belongings, heirlooms of their family, who had before this enjoyed the distinction of furnishing priestesses to Aphrodite:

And yonder is the room wherein thy couch,
It is the same that greeted thy arrival
On that first day, full seven years ago—
The couch that saw thee grow and bloom and ripen,

And gain in wisdom and in gentle goodness,
Whereon, thy cheeks by healthy slumber reddened,
Thou lay'st in gentle dreams of happiness
That now are realized— But still thou dream'st.

Hero.

I listen to thee, uncle.

The priest had hoped to find her happier than before, but she pleads for one night's rest, to collect her thoughts, which come and go. He leaves her, with an uneasy foreboding:

Sleep well then, and if counsel thou requir'st,
Seek it in me, who as thy father am;
But if thou shouldst the friend's advice reject,
Gladly from out these veins would pour my blood
Were there within a solitary drop
That could do wrong or harbor evil thought.

Hero is alone and left to her thoughts.

What happened in the grove—I clearly see—
When those two youths I met, displeased the priest;
Nor is he wrong, as I in truth must own.
Had I not Hero been, and not a priestess,
Destined to serve the gods with pious heart,
The younger, smaller, him with ringlets dark,
Perhaps I should have liked. Perhaps? Ah! Yes,
I know now that affection, as they call it,
Is something real, that can be avoided.
Avoid it then I shall. Ye gracious gods!
How much does teach a day, and ah, how little
Gives us, or takes from memory, a year!
He's gone! And nevermore perchance I'll see him.
Thus ends it all. And well it is, perhaps.

(She takes off her cloak.)

Lie here! This morn in quite a different mood

I took thee up than now I lay thee down:
The story of a life thou dost enfold.
Keep what thou know'st! I shook it off with thee.
But what am I to do? I cannot sleep.

(She seizes the lamp and holds it up.)

Inspect the place! How large it is and empty!
Oft shall I see thee through the many years;
What thou canst offer I shall learn full soon.
Hark! Nothing stirred. Alone, alone, alone!
(She puts the lamp down before the window and looks out.)

How quiet is the night! The Hellespont
Lets its still waves play on, as children do.
They barely whisper, bent on silent pleasure.
No sound, no glimmer! Only this my lamp
Throws pallid lights far out into the dark.
I move thee closer to the window bars,
That some belated wand'rer may rejoice
In thinking that one soul at least still wakes.
Be thou a star illumining the night,
And send thy ray to yonder distant shore!
But thou may watch— Go then to sleep,
Thou pale companion, with thy steady light.
And as I darken now thy gentle ray,
So may extinguished be what here still glimmers
And no new evening evermore shall kindle.

(She puts the lamp down on the table.)

Still up so late?— O mother, please, O please!—
No, children must sleep early! Be it so!

(She takes the jewels from her hair and sings in a subdued voice.)

"And Leda strokes
The plumage soft—"

Why does this song forever haunt my mind?
No longer gods descend to desert towers,
No swan, no eagle, comforts loneliness,
Forgotten solitude is and remains,

A lyre have placed they here for me to use.
 I never learned to play upon its strings.
 In truth I wish I had. Thoughts come and go,
 And in confuséd flight benumb my soul.
 Sweet sounds may help them to a harmony.
 O handsome youth, so gentle and so kind,
 I in this late hour truly think of thee,
 And with so evenly diffused a feeling
 That in its folds no evil-doing lurks.
 I wish thee well, rejoicing thou art far;
 And if my voice could reach thee where thou art,
 In greeting I should call: good-night!

Leander (appearing in the background at the window).

Good-night!

Hero.

Ha! what is this? Is't echo, thou, that speak'st?
 Dost visit me here in my solitude?
 Welcome, fair nymph, I greet thy coming!

Leander.

I greet thee, nymph!

Hero.

This is no echo, no

A head! Two arms! A man here at the window!
 He lifts himself, he comes! He kneels upon the sill!
 Stand back! Lost art thou if I raise my voice.

Leander.

Grant me to tarry but a single moment!
 The stones are crumbling underneath my feet.
 If thou permitt'st not I must plunge below.
 A little while, and gladly I climb back.

(He descends into the room.)

Hero.

Stand there, and stir not! God-forsaken one,
 What led thee hither?

Leander.

I beheld thy light

Send out its rays into the darkness deep.
 Here, too, 'twas night, and for the light I longed,
 And therefore climbed I.

Hero.

Who was thy companion?
 Who held the ladder, lent thee arm and aid?

Leander.

No ladder had I, nor had I man's help.
 I placed my foot where loosely stones were joined,
 And with my hand to ivy clung and creepers.
 Thus came I here.

Hero.

And hadst thou slipped and fallen?

Leander.

Then had I happy been.

Hero.

And had they seen thee?

Leander.

They saw not.

Hero.

Those who guard this sacred place
 Are at this very moment keeping watch.
 Unhappy man! Hadst thou not been commanded,
 Not begged by me, to turn thy footsteps home?

Leander.

I was at home, but rest there I found none;
 Then sought the sea I, and I swam across.

Hero.

How? From Abydos' widely separated shore?
 A distance that two oarsmen's strength might tax?

Leander.

Thou seest I did it. And if I had died,
 A prey to the first wave's advance had sunk,
 Still had I been by so much nearer thee,
 And died a sweeter death.

Hero.

Thy hair is wet,
And wet thy garment is. Thou shiver'st, too.

Leander.

I shiver not from cold. Heat shakes my frame.
(*While still in the background, he is about to kneel down.*)

Hero.

Not so! Stay here, and rest a little while,
For soon thou must leave hence. 'Twas then my light,
The lamp, that gave direction thee and aim?
Thou warn'st me to conceal it in the future.

Leander.

O do it not, O maiden, do it not!
I shall not come again if thou dost chide,
But thy lamp's glow, O that deny me not!
As sleepless I this night my couch deserted,
And stepping from my cabin's lowly door,
From darkness into vaster darkness peered,
There lay the sea before me and its coasts,
A carpet huge and black, an endless black,
A world of mourning, universal sorrow.
My soul partook of all the gathered wildness,
When lo! a sudden flash on the horizon,
A little star appeared, like a last hope.
Spun in a thousand threads, the glow illumed,
A golden net, the dark and dreary world.
It was thy light, this tower's shining lamp.
A mighty hope then swelled my beating heart,
That would no longer stay within its bounds;
I hastened to the shore, and plunged, and swam,
That light before my eye a steady guide.
And thus I came, and thus I reached this shore.
I shall not come again if angry thou,
But do not rob me of my star and hope,
Withdraw my consolation not, this light.

Hero gently refuses, reminding Leander:

I am betrothed to duties harsh and serious,
 And loveless must remain the priestess' heart.
 Two days ago hadst come thou, I was free;
 Now 'tis too late. Go then, nor e'er return!

She points out to him the gate that will lead him to a safer path than the one by which he came; but steps are heard approaching. Terror-struck, after vainly looking for a hiding place for Leander, she allows him to seek safety in her own room. He takes the lamp with him, and she remains in the darkness. The guardian of the temple, accompanied by Ianthe, enters. He has seen the light, and will not listen to Ianthe, who seeks to shield the priestess from his suspicion. He retires, protesting that the morrow will show that he was right. When the guardian and Ianthe are gone, Leander emerges from Hero's room without the lamp, and in the darkness he accidentally touches her shoulder. She starts back affrighted and asks him to bring the lamp:

Leander (returning with the lamp).

Here is thy lamp,

(He puts it down.)

And with me thank the gods.

Hero.

Thank, say'st thou? Thank? For what? That still thou livest?

Is such thy happiness? O wretched man!

Why camest thou here? With no thought but of thee,

My peaceful days thou cruelly disturb'st,

Instilling poison in my quiet breast.

O would the sea had ruthless swallowed thee

When thou didst give thy body to the waves!

Would that the crumbling stones had slipped thy grasp

When climbing up this tower thy fingers clutched,
Would thou—O frightful picture! O Leander!

Leander.

What say'st thou? Dost thou chide me not?

Hero.

Leander,

Hear me! Take not the same way back thou camest!
Thy path is dangerous, is monstrous, horrible!
What is it that enshrouds us so in night,
So makes us strangers to our very selves,
As to subject us to those strange to us?
When they appeared, three steps from me, and saw me,
I trembled, yet not for myself. Perverseness!
For him I trembled!

Leander.

O may I believe it?

Hero.

Speak not! And touch me not! That is not right
Which so perverts our very inmost nature,
Extinguishes the light the gods have given,
To lead us as the polar star does lead
The mariner.

Leander.

And that thou callest bad?
The whole world blesses it and sings its praise,
And love they call it.

Hero.

Then thou, too, poor youth,
Thou, too, didst learn that strange and varied word,
And thou dost say it, and thou call'st thee happy?

(Touching his head.)

And must thou swim through all the raging sea,
Where death in every drop? And when thou com'st,
Await thee spying men, and murderers—

(She starts with a shudder, as she glances backward.)

Leander (jumping up).

What is it?

Hero.

O each sound betokens danger!
My knees are trembling.

Leander.

Hero, Hero, Hero!

Hero.

Refrain, and touch me not! Thou must away,
Myself shall lead thee where the path is safe;
For if they came, and found thee here and caught thee—
(*She clings to the back of the chair for support.*)

Leander.

And may I, maiden, come again?

Hero.

Thou come!

Leander.

Thou say'st then, never, never for all time?
Hast thou well weighed the horror of the word?
And wilt thou not desire to know my fate?
Through roaring breakers leads my way from here,
Wilt thou not trembling fear I sank and died
If silence follows me?

Hero.

Then send me word.

Leander.

No word can come but what I bring myself.

Hero.

Come then, thou welcome messenger, O come!
But not to this, this place of death. See there
A sandy stretch reach out into the sea,
Come hither then, a bush will hide thy form,
And passing, shall I hear what thou wilt say.

Leander.

But here this lamp—keep bright its friendly glow,
To lead to blissful goal my safe return.
But when may I come back? O Hero, speak!

Hero.

When next the festive day—

Leander.

O jest not thus!

Say when.

Hero.

When full the moon appears anew.

Leander.

Till ten eternal days have dragged their length!
Canst thou so long support a doubt? Not I.
My fears will make me think my steps are known.
Thou wilt believe me dead, and rightly so,
For if the sea shall mercifully spare,
Then anxious longing shall my life consume.
In two days, Hero, say; say then in three,
Say next week, Hero!

Hero.

Come to-morrow, then.

Leander.

O bliss! O happiness!

Hero.

And when, Leander,
Thou swimm'st the sea, at night, as when thou camest,
Guard carefully this head and guard this mouth,
And these my eyes. O hear'st thou what I say?
Give me thy promise.

(She draws back, as he tries to embrace her.)

No, no! Follow me!

I'll lead thee.

(She goes to the table, to fetch the lamp.)

Leander.

O sublime, divinest woman!

Hero.

Why com'st thou not?

Leander.

And am I thus, athirst,
To leave this consecrated, blissful spot

Without a sign of thy affection, some poor pledge
To quench the longing that consumes my soul?

Hero.

What mean'st thou?

Leander.

Giv'st thou not at least thy hand
And then—then seeks the thirsty lip the lip—
As I have seen it—and they whisper low
What is too precious for the wanton air.
My mouth be mouth, and thine be only ear!
Lend me thine ear, and hear what dumb I speak!

Hero.

That must not be.

Leander.

Must I dare all, nought thou?
I facing danger, death, thou e'er refusing?
(*With childish petulance.*)
If sadly I depart, I'll surely sink.

Hero.

Tempt not the gods!

Leander.

And thou withhold not, maid!

Hero.

If, then, thou go'st—

Leander (dropping upon his knees).

I do!

Hero.

And wilt not say
That with too light a hand thy cheek I touched,
But gently and in grateful mood obeyest—

Leander.

Dost thou delay?

Hero.

Fold then thy arms behind,
Like to a prisoner, the pris'ner of my love.

Leander.

See, it is done.

Hero (putting the lamp on the floor).

The lamp is not to see it.

Leander.

Still dost thou tarry.

Hero.

Art thou so impatient?

Then never shall—and yet, if it rejoice thee—

Take this, and give!

(She kisses him quickly.)

And now thou must away!

Leander (jumping up).

Hero!

Hero.

No, no!

(She hurries away.)

Leander.

If I beseech thee, Hero!

O jealous fate! Ill-starred!

(He listens at the door.)

But I hear steps,

They are her steps, and they approach the door,

She walks on tiptoe— She returns! Ye gods!

(The curtain falls.)

After a climax such as this, which closes the third act, no further heightening of dramatic effect is possible. The fourth act, the scenes of which follow upon the night in the tower, does not inspire the breathless interest with which the spectator has witnessed the rapid unfolding of a passion doomed to end in the surrender of the virgin priestess to woman's destiny. The guardian of the temple has seen a stranger plunge into the sea, and Hero "scarce three steps away." He tells the priest of his discovery and his

suspicions. All nature seemed strangely agitated during the night. No breeze was stirring, and yet the leaves whispered to each other, and the waves beat more loudly against the shore, and knowing looked the stars. The tower, from which shone a light, was the centre of all this restlessness.

"A half reveal'd secret seemed the night."

When the priest finally enters the tower, to find the solution of the mystery, he meets Ianthe arrayed in festive attire. He sends for Hero. Ianthe admits having heard strange noises at Hero's door.

Uneasy was I, lonely, and I went
To see if she had heard, uneasy like myself.

Hero is undismayed by the priest's direct assertion that a stranger had entered the tower, and she arouses his ire by the jesting reply:

Well, then perhaps 'twas one of those above.
Thou often said'st: In days of long ago
A god would come to visit blessed mortals;
To Leda came he.

She says, in explanation of her distracted ways,

I recognize that much of what does happen
Concerns me nearly, yes, perhaps most near.
Yet do I grasp it not. My mind is gloomy,
I must have time to think.

But before she retires to seek sorely needed rest, the priest commands her to go on various errands, whose sole purpose is to lull her into a feeling of security, and to

fatigue her to the point of exhaustion. The scene changes to Abydos. Naukleros knocks at Leander's door, which he finds closed. Leander returns with dripping clothes, which tell the tale of his nightly adventure. His friend vainly locks the exhausted swimmer in his cabin, in the endeavor to prevent him from repeating during the coming night his foolhardy attempt. Leander, with renewed strength, escapes, unshaken in his determination to swim the Hellespont. Hero has returned to the tower, and trims the lamp which is to send its friendly glow to Abydos' shore. She sits down near the entrance to the tower, to watch and wait.

Here will I seat me, and guard well thy light,
 No envious gust thy kindly ray shall stifle.
 Here it is cool, the tower is close and drowsy,
 The air there heavily might press my lids.
 That shall not be. I must remain awake.
 They have throughout the long day plagued me sore,
 And kept me going, not without an aim,
 But why and wherefore I cannot divine.

(Her head drops upon her hand.)

Yet care I not! When clear will be my brow
 I may know why. And then—e'en though—if but—

(She starts up.)

What is't? Who comes? Alone I am. The wind
 Blows sharper from the sea. 'Tis better so,
 For sooner shall my love be driven here.
 The lamp burns brightly still. Fie, who would dream?

And welcoming the night wind, which fans her cheek with sweet messages from her lover, she falls asleep. And thus the priest and the guardian of the temple find her. The former enters the tower.

Guardian.

What wills he? Anxious dread oppresses me.
Had I not spoken— Yet what could I do?
I see there fishermen pass with their nets.

(Turning to the right.)

What is your purpose? Were you not commanded
To keep away to-night from sea and shore,
Securely locked within your sheltering huts?

(Returning.)

They say a storm is near. Best know the gods!

(Looking up to the tower.)

Who moves the lamp? 'Tis he! O wretched maid!
She wakes? No! Does no kindly dream then warn thee?

Hero stirs, breathing heavily, and then sinks into deeper
slumber. Darkness has set in.

Priest (returning and approaching the spot where Hero sleeps).

Ye gods inscrutable, your will be done!
The sea restrains, and sleep enfolds, the guilty.
And thus your priest his mission has fulfilled.
Piled is the wood, the axe in readiness,
I turn to go. Strike ye, ye gods, the victim!

The following morning witnesses the closing scenes.
Ianthe finds Hero distractedly staring at the sea. She
was awakened during the night by the storm, and found
the lamp extinguished. She now seeks consolation in the
thought that the gods mercifully extinguished the light
before Leander could brave the raging sea. Ianthe notices
that the bush at the base of the tower is broken, and that
the fallen branches half conceal a veil, resembling Hero's
own. She lifts the branches; they disclose Leander's body.
Hero's cry of anguish attracts the priest to the spot. He
enjoins silence upon Ianthe.

A stranger is the man, unknown to us,
 Cast by the sea upon this shore by chance,
 And yonder priestess sank down near his body;
 For he was human, and she found him dead.

Hero now openly proclaims her grief, as well as the happiness that was hers, and she accuses herself to Naukleros, who has come to look for Leander, of being the cause of his death.

O, he was all in all! What now remains
 Is shadows, and they vanish into nothing.
 His breath the air was, and his eye the sun,
 His body was the force of budding nature,
 His life was life, mine and thy own as well,
 The life of all the world. We let it die,
 And died with it. Come, thou forgetful friend,
 Come, let us follow our own corpses now.
 Thou hast two dresses, and thy friend has none,
 Give me thy dress, and we shall bury him.

The body is brought into the temple before being surrendered to Naukleros. Hero takes final leave of Leander, and, broken-hearted, sinks down at his bier, united to her lover in death.

"Des Meeres and der Liebe Wellen" presents within its Greek framework a love story so simple and moving as to appeal to an audience as wide as the universe. "Grillparzer," says Ehrhard, "has produced works more powerful and ample and richer in thought, but none which gives in the same degree the impression of enchanting perfection. In many respects 'Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen' reminds one of the best tragedies of Racine, but of a Racine who commands all the resources of romanticism, and

whose eye not only searches the depths of the human soul, but fastens upon the outward form of men and things." One of the finest scenes of the play, full of this essential truth to inner life and outward circumstance, that in which Hero places the lamp on the floor, lest it see the kiss which she bestows on Leander, is reproduced from an actual experience of the poet's. In his diary of the year 1819 there is this entry, made with a view to possible dramatic use: "Note that she* was in bad humor the entire evening, disdainful and almost rude. When I was about to leave, however, she put the lamp down on the floor and exclaimed: 'I must embrace you,' throwing at the same time her arms around my neck and pressing me to her heart with all the ardor of passionate desire. Study this character carefully. A poet will not easily find a more interesting one." As a scarcely less direct example of self-revelation we may cite these lines from another famous passage in the play:

Concentred thought? Spoke thus mere accident?
 Or didst thou fully grasp its meaning, child?
 The word thou utter'st balm is to my ear,
 For thou hast named the world's prodigious lever,
 Which raises what is great a thousand fold,
 And moves the smallest closer to the stars.
 The hero's deed, the poet's holy song,
 The seer's vision, and the hand of gods—
 Attention rapt conceives or comprehends them;
 Distraction idly mocks what ne'er it grasps.

*Charlotte von Paumgarten, who is mentioned later on.

XII

GRILLPARZER AND HIS FRIENDS

THE fate of "Hero und Leander" (as the play is popularly called) affected but little the official position of its author. With the death of his friend Count Stadion, every prospect of his advancement in the bureau of the ministry of finance vanished. As Fäulhammer says, "he was considered the greatest poet among the Austrian officials in the department of finance, and nothing else. Grillparzer, however, complained that he was ignored precisely because of his literary fame. Perhaps both the petty official and his superiors were not entirely wrong. In the year 1818, when Grillparzer travelled in Italy, in the retinue of the Emperor Francis, it was thought that Austria was approaching the dawn of that blissful era when king and poet were to be equals. But how quickly did that dream vanish! Grillparzer, with all his love of country and his loyalty to the state, remained throughout his life true to the conviction that the arts ought never to degrade themselves to the position of handmaid to the government. The reign of Francis I. had no respect for the ideal treasures of mankind, and Grillparzer, who in spite of his greatness as a poet was not easy to deal with as a man, proved an awkward stumbling block in the path of statesmen, not least of all because the petty official was a European celebrity, and as such a silent reproach to the Austrian Government."

In 1831 the position of Director of the Imperial Archives became vacant, and Grillparzer decided to apply for it. His petition is notable for the display of that lofty self-consciousness which, with all his habitual modesty, never failed him on the proper occasion. He wrote: "I have a right to some consideration. Boastfulness was never the greatest of my faults. My outward position would be different had I understood the art of always making suitable display of whatever merits I may possess. But to be unconscious of one's worth is to class one's self with the foolish and the faint-hearted. Through my literary labors I have honored my country, and if everybody owes a debt to his country, I may also claim that mine is to some slight extent indebted to me. Other states have academies, literary positions and salaried places of various kinds open as reward for literary labors; Austria, perhaps justly, has none of these. . . . I apply for the vacant position because I am amply able to fill it and, I may candidly say, fill it better than any of my competitors."

The position was given to him, in January, 1832, not so much because the state recognized the justice of his claims, as because he was virtually the only available applicant. None of his colleagues in office cared for it, as the promotion precluded all prospect of further advancement. A monograph devoted to Grillparzer's activity as director of the archives (Gerson Wolf's "Grillparzer als Archiv-director") tells us that the poet did his work conscientiously enough, though with but little inward satisfaction. "The scholars who resorted to the archives in connection with their studies were received by him as amiably or

rather unamiably as was then customary in institutions of this kind."

After the death of his friend Schreyvogel, in 1832, Grillparzer's relations with the Burgtheater practically ceased. The new director, Deinhardstein, showed no comprehension of his genius. He had no intimate friends, aside from the Fröhlich sisters, in whose company he spent all his evenings. Katharina, however, was no longer his *fiancée*. She had been such for five years, but in 1826, when preparations for the wedding were being made, one of their frequent quarrels ended in a rupture. It is impossible to deny that the principal cause of this alienation lay in the inconsistencies of Grillparzer's own character. He loved Katharina, or Kathi, as he familiarly called her, deeply, even passionately, but as he himself confessed, in a letter to his friend Altmütter, he was "incapable of true love." He reproached himself for his changing moods. "After a day of the most glowing tenderness," he wrote, "there may easily follow, without any particular cause, one of complete estrangement." "I believe I am not wrong in saying that I love in the object of my affection only the image drawn by my fancy, so that the reality is enchanting only as long as it agrees with my conception, but becomes all the more repelling if it deviates ever so little from the image I have formed. Can this be called love? Pity me and her, who so richly deserves to be loved for her real self."

Katharina, on the other hand, with all her native goodness and charm, had certain faults of temperament which rendered her unfit to become the wife of the sensitive poet. She was given to outbursts of jealousy—not, it must be

admitted, without serious provocation on his part—inclined to be headstrong, and without a full appreciation of the requirements of his inmost nature. He was essentially a solitary being, and though he speaks of himself in his autobiography as possessing “something conciliatory and yielding which made me only too prone to abandon myself to the guidance of others,” he more than once lays stress on the necessity of preserving intact his liberty of action. “I could not brook interference even had I made up my mind to it. In married life I should have had to remain single, forgetting that my wife was a different being from myself, though I should gladly have taken my part in those mutual concessions which banish discord. But to be one of two in the real meaning of the word was impossible to my solitary nature. Once, indeed, it seemed as though such a union was to be founded, but the tie was broken, God knows through no fault of mine.”

In one of his most striking poems, “Jugenderinnerungen im Grünen” (Recollections of My Youth, Composed Among the Trees), Grillparzer thus speaks of the fatal antagonism between their natures:

“Im Glutumfassen stürzten wir zusammen,
Ein jeder Schlag gab Funken und gab Licht;
Doch unzerstörbar fanden uns die Flammen,
Wir glühten, aber ach, wir schmolzen nicht.
Denn Hälften kann man aneinander passen,
Ich war ein Ganzes, und auch sie war ganz.”

(Our glowing souls sped on to closest union,
Each contact drew forth fire and gave out light;
But unconsumed our burning passion left us,
We were aflame, but could not fuse aright.

For halves may unto halves be mated,
But I was whole, and whole she was created.)

And truly pathetic are the concluding lines:

"Doch all umsonst, trotz Ringen, Stürmen, Weinen,
Sie blieb ein Weib, und ich war immer ich!

* * * * *

Da ward ich hart. Im ew'gen Spiel der Winde,
Im Wettersturm, wo Sonne nie durchblickt,
Umzog das stärk're Bäumchen sich mit Rinde,
Das schwäch're neigte sich und ward zerknickt."

(In vain, despite each struggle, tear and sigh,
A woman she remained, as I was ever I.
And when departed hope no longer found me,
A lonely tree, wrapped in the tempest's gloom,
I drew the hard, protecting bark around me,
While bent the weaker tree and, breaking, met its doom.)

Perhaps, in the last analysis, the key to Grillparzer's final refusal to wed Katharina must be sought in that irresoluteness and lack of self-confidence concerning the practical affairs of life which were among his characteristic weaknesses. "I hadn't courage enough to marry" (I hab' mi net traut), as he confided to a friend, in that quaint Viennese dialect which he used in familiar conversation. Whatever may have been his motive in deciding to remain single, the final rupture between the lovers nearly broke Katharina's heart. When he left her, after an outburst of jealousy on her part which her sisters described as terrific, she fell violently ill. Even after her recovery, though she recognized that marriage was impossible, the thought of losing Grillparzer forever was so unendurable to her

that her sisters feared she could not survive a total separation. They hoped that it might still be possible to establish at least relations of friendship between them, and they implored Grillparzer not to abandon her whose love for him was undying. Though his own feelings had changed—"My love is dead; I should be only too willing to revive it, but I can't"—he consented to a compromise which could not restore happiness to Katharina, while it forced him into an attitude of doubtful resignation. He returned to her as a friend, and as such he was true to her for the rest of his life.

However indifferent Grillparzer was to public notoriety and to conventional social distinctions, he craved the stimulus of judicious recognition from kindred souls. He said of himself: "There is something of Tasso in me, not of Goethe's Tasso, but of the Tasso of reality. I ought to have been coddled, that is to say, as a poet. As a man I know how to adapt myself to any kind of condition, and shall never be found untrue to myself. But the poet within me needs a congenial element, otherwise my soul contracts and becomes unresponsive." Fortunately, there gathered about him, at the beginning of the thirties, a small circle of chosen spirits, who looked up to him as their master, and in whose company he passed some of the happiest hours of his life. The most devoted of these disciples was Eduard von Bauernfeld, at first known as a lyric poet, but subsequently and down to his death, in 1890, perhaps the most successful writer of comedies for the Austrian and German stages. He understood and depicted to perfection Viennese life of the upper classes, and his plays, lightly constructed but full of animation and sparkle, delighted and held the

public of the Burgtheater that had turned with indifference from the master works of Grillparzer. Other members of the informal literary club which had its headquarters at a well-known restaurant, "Beim Stern auf der Brandstätte," were the philosopher Feuchtersleben, the painter Schwind, the actor and dramatist Raimund, the liberal abbot Enk, the Germanic scholar Karajan, and other Austrian celebrities. Heinrich Laube, subsequently director of the Burgtheater, who did so much to revive public interest in Grillparzer's plays, describes in his "Reisenovellen" one of the evening meetings of the club at the "Star," which he attended as a guest. Grillparzer presided at the table.

"He wears a short green coat, is very simple in appearance, and appears a trifle over-polite. His well-formed face would scarcely strike one in a crowd if one did not know whose it was. Its most characteristic features are a fine faultless nose, a suggestion of the Hapsburg lower lip, blue eyes, questioning like those of a child, and a gentle, placid expression, not free from melancholy. The corners of the mouth betray many an hour of deep anxiety. He speaks in a soft, flexible voice."

At the meeting which Laube attended, says Fäulhammer, the conversation turned on the contents of a recent number of the *Europe Littéraire*, which Bauernfeld read aloud, and on Euripides, whom Grillparzer defended with the utmost warmth. "He also manifested great interest in Heine and praised his opinions concerning German literature. He was particularly glad that Heine criticized Tieck and the romanticists so sharply. . . . Such were the evening gatherings at the 'Star,' those timid Austrian reform

banquets that afforded Grillparzer an opportunity of communicating his rich intellectual treasures to his companions at the table. The society was characterized by complete informality, but the younger generation treated the man of forty, who liked to assume the airs of the experienced sage, with becoming deference. He appeared amused or bored, as suited his fancy, and no one objected. He was always gladly taken just as he was. Gradually his melancholy left him, and the satirical trait, which had already been apparent in the boy, found ample scope during these symposia."

Grillparzer cultivated during that happy period his innate love of music. He sang on Sundays and holidays in the choir of the church Am Hof, and published several compositions for the piano. The new hall of the Vienna Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde (Society of Music Lovers) was opened in 1833 by a festive hymn whose words were written by him, and in 1834 he took a leading part in a celebration, in the same place, in honor of Goethe and Beethoven, contributing both to the musical and literary features of the occasion.

XIII

DER TRAUM EIN LEBEN

ON the 4th of October, 1834, Grillparzer scored one of the most complete successes of his life in the first performance, at the Burgtheater, of his "Der Traum ein Leben" (The Dream, a Life), a dramatic fairy story. He had handed the play to Schreyvogel in 1831, simultaneously with the manuscript of "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen," but his friend did not take kindly to the title, which seemed to challenge comparison with Calderon's "Life's a Dream," a drama he had himself so admirably adapted for the German stage. The sub-title first chosen was "a spectacular play," in conformity with the fashion of the day which delighted in the fantastic fairy comedies of Raimund. Schreyvogel hesitated to produce the play, and Grillparzer withdrew it. After Schreyvogel's death, Bauernfeld, to whom Grillparzer had referred the manuscript for his opinion, and who felt sure of the success of the play, handed it to the new director of the Burgtheater, Deinhardstein, who kept it nearly two years before putting it on the stage.

The beginning of "Der Traum ein Leben" dates back to 1817, when Grillparzer wrote the first act of a play which he called "Des Lebens Schattenbild" (Life's Shadow Pictures). The actor to whom he told the story of the drama, and who was to have played the part of the negro Zanga, objected to appearing with a blackened face, and communicated the plot to another dramatist, who made use of the

idea for a play of his own. This was produced in 1818, and found other imitators. Grillparzer contented himself with printing his act in a dramatic almanac, but he returned to his plot in 1829, and finished the play two years later. Although the idea was probably suggested by Calderon's "La vida es sueño," Grillparzer's drama owes its existence in part to his study of Lope de Vega, to two of whose comedies it bears, in certain scenes, a striking resemblance. The central idea, however, was confessedly founded on Voltaire's story "Le Blanc et le Noir."

The hero of Grillparzer's play, whose name, Rustan, is borrowed from Voltaire, is an ambitious youth, who on the eve of attaining humble domestic happiness through his marriage to a lovely maiden, is goaded on by his negro slave Zanga to a life of wild and daring adventure, that is to result in boundless glory. These adventures are shown us in Rustan's dream. He falls asleep in his uncle's lowly cabin, and the deeds and crimes which his troubled dreams conjure up are placed before the spectator in an almost bewildering series of exciting incidents. At last, when about to meet with just retribution for his crimes and to plunge into a watery grave, Rustan is suddenly restored to his couch, upon which he uneasily turns. The images that have haunted him disappear; he awakens and realizes that he has but dreamed. He returns to his betrothed, dismisses his evil genius, and forever renounces the treacherous paths of ambition.

"Life bestows a single treasure:
Quiet peace for guileless hearts.
Spurn ambition's reckless pleasure,
Idle glory's empty arts."

✓ "Der Traum ein Leben," the first act of which was written soon after "Die Ahnfrau," follows it closely as to metre, and resembles it also in other features. Its melodious verse, which does not easily lend itself to translation, carries the reader along with irresistible impetuosity, while the spectator is fascinated by the constant shifting of scenes and incidents. The charm lies in the spirit and movement of the whole and not, as is the case in most of the other of Grillparzer's plays, in character drawing and delicacy of execution. The drama is, moreover, interesting as a psychological study of dream life. The plot has all the exuberance of the Orient, as pictured in a poet's fancy. The characters come and go with the shadowy uncertainty of dream phantoms, and yet the whole is consistent and dissolves into a convincing story. Plot and versification point unmistakably to the Spanish sources from which the poet so often derived inspiration.

The extraordinary success which the play met with at its first performance was confirmed by the subsequent verdict of the Vienna public. "Der Traum ein Leben" has been performed at the Burgtheater more frequently than any other of Grillparzer's plays. But the author himself realized that in the plot of his symbolical fairy story he had made a bold choice, "the like of which," he said, "is permitted to a writer but once."

XIV

TRAVELS IN FRANCE AND ENGLAND

GRILLPARZER was not long allowed to enjoy undisturbed the congenial atmosphere of his literary club. Its fame provoked the hostility of malevolent critics, among whom M. G. Saphir, a shallow journalistic wit, whose humorous lectures were much in vogue in those days, was the most conspicuous. Saphir, a man as vain as he was personally unattractive, had applied for permission to join the society at the "Star," but was refused, at the instance of Grillparzer and Bauernfeld, and never forgave the affront. Grillparzer allowed himself to be drawn into a controversy with him, and proved no match for his unscrupulous and clever antagonist. He refrained thereafter from taking any public notice of journalistic abuse.

His dissatisfaction with existing conditions was augmented under the régime of the new emperor, Ferdinand, who ascended the throne after the death of his father, on March 2, 1835. The Emperor Francis, always popular with the masses, had enjoyed a certain respect even on the part of the Liberals; the new government, however, met with nothing but distrust. Metternich was its master spirit, as he had been that of the old.

"The party of opposition," says Fäulhammer, "was joined by all the intelligent classes, above all by the

younger and more capable of the government officials. Everywhere, in the home, in public resorts, in social circles, clubs, theatres, as well as in literary productions, the spirit of opposition was more or less openly expressed. The petty arts of the secret police proved impotent, and merely provoked a smile. It was not considered decent in Vienna to side with the government, so contemptible had it become. And if free speech was prohibited within the empire, there were enough writers elsewhere who could say whatever they pleased, and tons of prohibited books, pamphlets, and journals were brought across the frontier. The younger literary men of Austria emigrated, and in Leipzig alone there was a colony of those wasps whose sting was so keenly felt by the chancellor and his colleagues. Grillparzer remained at home. He punctually attended to his official duties, published not a line against the government, and yet was considered one of the leaders of the dissatisfied intellectuals. He stuck manfully to his post under most dispiriting conditions; but in order to live on in the stifling atmosphere of Vienna, he needed to refresh himself from time to time in the freer air of another country."

The impressions he had brought with him from Italy during his visit in 1819 had influenced his whole life, and his experiences in Germany, seven years later, though not equally valuable, had proved stimulating in various ways. He now felt the desire to acquaint himself with France and England, and to see the workings of those free institutions for which the liberals of Austria so vainly longed.

In the spring of 1836 Grillparzer went to Paris. The sittings of the French Chambers interested him,

deeply, but he was little attracted by individual celebrities. He wrote in his diary: "I take good care not to visit the French writers. These people are terribly conceited; they cannot see that they owe two-thirds of their fame to the fact that they write in French, the language of the world." He became, however, acquainted with Alexandre Dumas, who "through his then mistress and subsequent wife, the actress Ida, had acquired a dim idea of the 'Ahnfrau,' for which, as belonging to the *genre romantique*, he professed great respect. He passed among his colleagues for a profound student of German literature," although he did not know a single word of the language.

While Grillparzer generally kept aloof from the playhouses of Vienna, he went in Paris almost every night to the theatre or the opera. Meyerbeer showed him much attention, but he was more at home in the modest quarters of Börne and Heine. Heine, then at the height of his fame and still in vigorous health, was so poor that, as he told his visitor, his library consisted of but one book, which he had borrowed from a friend. Grillparzer enjoyed Heine's conversation greatly. "I have perhaps never heard a German writer talk so sensibly," he wrote; but much as he admired Heine when alone with him, he was disgusted with his behavior when they happened to dine together at the house of the banker Rothschild. "It was evident that the host and his wife were afraid of Heine, and knowing this, he took every occasion to cover them with half-concealed ridicule. But it is wrong to take a meal at the house of a person whom one does not respect; one cannot play the part of guest while feeling contempt

for the host. From that time on our relations ceased." Rossini, whom Grillparzer had previously met in Italy, was also one of the invited guests on that occasion. "He had become a perfect Frenchman, spoke the language like a native, and was inexhaustible in witty sallies. He is famous as a gourmand, and while he was always welcome as a friend of the family, he had been invited on this particular evening chiefly as a connoisseur of wines, in order to have him judge of a certain brand of champagne which the host thought of buying."

In London Grillparzer devoted as much attention to the sittings of Parliament as to the theatre. He heard and admired Peel and O'Connell, attended an all-night session, and was greatly impressed with the scene. He described the proceedings as "colossal and entrancing." He was equally interested in the English method of conducting public trials, and contrasted the dignified behavior of the spectators with the noisy ways of the public in French court rooms. The prevailing "sense of right and justice" strongly appealed to him.

Grillparzer returned to Vienna via Belgium and Germany. In Stuttgart he met the poet Uhland, whom he found as "simple and good-natured as one imagines him to be." The last entry in the diary of his journey is: "On my arrival at Munich I found letters with the news that my brother Karl had left wife, children, and office, and that the treasury in his charge was empty. He falsely accused himself of having committed murder and showed all the symptoms of insanity."

XV

WEH DEM, DER LÜGT

GRILLPARZER's first care on his return to Vienna was to vindicate the good name of his brother. His innocence of any crime was established, but he lost his position, and he and his wife were thereafter dependent on the slender purse of the poet.

In spite of the depressing effect of this incident Grillparzer busied himself with a new play, and not a little surprise was felt when it became known that he was at work on a comedy. His intimate friends indeed had long been aware that he possessed a good share of that humor which, along with an often superficial pessimism, is the birthright of every Viennese, and many an epigram of his testified to the possession of a caustic wit whose sting was in due time to be felt by more than one man high in the political, literary and artistic world of Austria and Germany. But these epigrams, like many of his lyrical effusions, slumbered in the seclusion of his desk, and the public was not prepared to welcome the author of the sombre "Ahnfrau" and "Medea" as the writer of a comedy.

"Weh dem, der lügt" (Woe to Him Who Lies) is a comedy in the sense of a French *comédie* rather than in that of a German *Lustspiel*. Its plot lacks what characterizes Grillparzer's other plays—dramatic intensity—but it is

V nevertheless a work of rare art, rich in profound thought, and pointing in the characters of Leon and Gregory a dramatic contrast of extraordinary effectiveness. The story is taken from an incident in the life of Gregory of Tours, whose young cook Leon, a lad full of native wit, and of boundless self-confidence, offers to rescue the bishop's nephew, Atalus, who is held captive by a German knight. Gregory permits Leon to make the attempt on one condition only—that he never utter an untruth. Leon undertakes the mission and succeeds, respecting the letter, while often dangerously near violating the spirit, of his master's injunction.

The scene at the opening of the play is a garden in the castle of Dijon. Leon, the kitchen-boy, and the steward are at the gate.

Leon.

I'm bound to see the bishop, come what may.

Steward.

Not so, say I, audacious boy, not so.

Leon (drawing his kitchen knife).

This weapon you shall taste unless you yield.

Select your place, I challenge you, Herr Sigrid.

Steward (retreating to the foreground).

Help! Murder! Help!

Leon.

Do you mistake my jest?

But all the same, the bishop I must see.

Steward.

It cannot be, for in the morning hour

He takes his airing here, and meditates.

Leon.

Then let him meditate upon me first

And my request, that now concerns him most.

C

Steward.

Thy place is in the kitchen, thither go!

Leon.

Indeed! The kitchen say you? Where is that?
 If kitchen be a place where people cook,
 You look for it in vain throughout this castle.
 Where one cooks not there is no kitchen, sir;
 Where there's no kitchen there's no cook. You see,
 That must the bishop hear, indeed he shall.
 Yes, I will tell him—never mind your frown!—
 For I say fie upon such niggard ways!
 First they dismiss the cook. Well, I begin to think,
 With proper pride, perhaps they trust in me;
 But scarcely do I show what I can do
 When they find all is dear, oh, much too dear.
 With nothing I'm to cook fine meals, forsooth!
 But yesterday I snatched a piece of game,
 Beyond compare delicious, for a song,
 Enjoying in advance my master's joy—
 Poor feeble man!—in tasting of the morsel.
 Yes, fine repast there was! I had to sell it,
 Sell at a sacrifice to some mean cook,
 Because it was too dear and far too precious.
 If stinginess this be not, what is it?

Steward.

They'll chase you hence, you master impudent!

Leon.

Chase me? O no! I'll save you all the trouble.
 I'll go myself. Here is my apron, see,
 And here the knife which gave you such a scare.

(He throws them both down.)

So, there they lie, and ne'er shall be picked up.
 Look for another cook to suit your fasting.
 Think you, for money I have served your master?
 There are still other ways and better ones
 By which a fellow such as I can live.

The king needs soldiers, and upon my soul
 A sword would not weigh heavy in this hand.
 Yet, when I saw your master in the streets,
 With his white beard and venerable form,
 His head bowed with the weight of many years,
 And yet uplifted by, I know not what,
 Though sure I am 'twas something good and noble;
 His eyes wide open as if seeing sights
 In some land distant and unknown to us,
 Sights far too great for ordinary eyes—
 When thus I saw him walking through our streets,
 A voice within me called: Him must you serve,
 If but as stable-boy. And thus I came here.
 In this house, thought I, reigns God's peace supreme,
 Though all the world may war. Now that I'm here,
 I see how every piece of bread he scants,
 As though he doomed himself to die of hunger,
 How he counts every bite that nears his mouth.
 Let watch this misery who can, not I!

Steward.

Why carest thou more for him than cares himself?
 Does he not bear his age with sturdy vigor?

Leon.

It may be so, but there's a deeper something,
 That sometimes seems to me as clear as day,
 And then again like hidden spell pursues me.
 He was to me the sum of all that's noble,
 And now that I must see so base a spot
 As stinginess, a stain so gross and foul,
 Upon the pureness of so white a garb,
 Must see it with my eyes against my will—
 That is the thing that lowers every man,
 Myself, and you, and all, in short the world,
 Whose very flower I thought him all this while;
 This tortures me beyond my power to bear.
 And so I leave, because I cannot stand it.

Steward.

And all this thou wilt tell him?

Leon.

Yes, I shall.

Steward.

This darest thou do?

Leon.

O still more will I dare!

He has to purge himself of guilt before me,
Must give me back my high esteem of him;
And will he not, why, then good-by to him.
Fie and disgrace upon all stinginess!

Steward.

Thou darest accuse him thus, the saintly man?
Know'st thou not, then, the poor, the blind and lame,
They are the purse to which he trusts his money?

Leon.

True, much he gives, and may God bless him for it;
But is it doing good to give the poor
When what you give leaves poorer still the giver?
And furthermore: The other day he called me,
And gave me money out of his huge chest—
My weekly stipend for the kitchen use—
But ere he gave, he took a silver coin,
Looked at it ten times, finally he kissed it,
And put it in a pouch filled to the brim,
Which in a corner of the chest bulked large.
I ask you now: Is he a godly man
Who kisses money? One who starves himself,
And heaps up savings in a bursting pouch,
What call you him? What call you such a man?
I'm not his cook. I'll leave, and tell him why.

Steward.

Thou mad and silly fellow, stay! Thou must!
To plague so kind a master! And to-day,

When burdened most with sorrow is his heart;
 For just a year ago his gentle nephew,
 His Atalus, was sent away to Treves,
 A hostage for the peace concluded then.
 There is he still, for war broke out afresh,
 In durance vile held by a cruel foe,
 Who, to entreaty deaf, refuses ransom.

Leon.

My master's nephew?

Steward.

Yes, a year ago.

Leon.

Has no attempt been made to set him free?

Steward.

O more than one, but all has been in vain.
 There comes the master, lost in meditation.
 Go, fellow, step aside, disturb him not!

Leon.

He's writing.

Steward.

A sermon, likely, for the holiday.

Leon.

How pale he looks!

Steward.

Yes, pale and sorrowful.

Leon.

Still, I must speak to him, in spite of all.

Steward.

Come, come!

(He seizes him.)

Leon.

Do what you will. I shall escape.

(Exeunt both. The bishop appears on the scene, a tablet in his hand, making notes from time to time.)

Gregory.

Thy language ever be: Yes, yes, no, no;
For what there is of evil in man's nature,
Of all that is unnatural and loathsome,
The worst is spoken falsehood, is a lie.
Were man but truthful, he were also good.
How else could sin perpetuate itself
If not by lying? First itself deceives,
Then all the world, then God, were't possible.
If every rascal had to tell himself
When he's alone: Thou art a scoundrel vile,
Who could despisal of himself endure?
But lies that hide in all their varied garb,
As vanity and pride, false modesty,
Again as generosity and strength,
As true affection and high-mindedness,
As purpose fair when bad the means employed—
Lies cover up our evil countenance,
And interpose themselves with hasty step
When man beholds himself in conscience' mirror.
And now to name the worst, the conscious lie!
Who'd think it possible were it not so?
O man, destroy'st thou thus thy Maker's world?
How canst thou say: 'Tis not, although it is?
Again: It is, though never it has been?
Dost thou attack existence, which has made thee?
Why, friendship, love, and sympathy with others,
The sacred ties that beautify our lives—
What gives them strength if not the truthful word?
True is all nature in its circling course;
True is the wolf that howls ere it devours,
True is the thunder threatening when it lightens,
True is the flame which at a distance singes,
The raging flood whose roar proclaims the whirlpool;
True are they all, for truth it is to be.
What then art thou that liest to thy brother,

Deceiv'st thy friend, deal'st foully with thy neighbor?
 Thou art no animal, for beasts are true,
 No wolf, or dragon, stone or poisonous plant;
 Thou art the devil, he alone doth lie,
 And devil art thou if a lie thou tell'st.
 Therefore, beloved brethren, be ye true,
 And let your word be: Yes, and no, for aye.
 Thus do I penance for the pride in me.
 For had I truly spoken when the king
 Asked recently if aught my heart desired,
 And begged of him a ransom for my child,
 He now were free, and quiet were my heart.
 But prompted by my ire—though justified—
 My answer was: My lord, I need no gift,
 Give it to those who fawn and rob the land;
 And in his wrath he turned his face from me,
 And in his prison languishes still Atalus.

(He sits down on a grassy knoll exhausted.)

Leon (appearing).

Hard work it was to free myself from him.
 There sits my master, with bare head, O Lord!
 First he spurns food, then braves he the raw air
 Of early spring, with nothing in his stomach.
 He's trifling with his life. God is my witness
 That if I stayed with him I'd buy a cap,
 And throw it in his way for him to find
 And put upon his head; for he himself
 Would never buy it. Fie upon a niggard!
 He sees me not. I shall address him, else
 When comes Herr Sigrid I shall try in vain.
 My reverend lord!

Gregory.

Call'st thou, my Atalus?

Leon.

'Tis I, my lord!

Gregory.

Who art thou?

Leon.

I am Leon,

Leon, the kitchen-boy, or I might say,

Leon the cook, if so God wills.

Gregory (with emphasis).

Yes, if—

For wills he not, thou liest dead, a nothing.

Leon.

O how you frighten me!

Gregory.

Thy wish, boy?

Leon.

Sir!

Gregory.

Where is thy apron, cook? and where thy knife?

And whose is what lies yonder in the sand?

Leon.

It is my knife, my apron it is, sir.

Gregory.

Why on the ground?

Leon.

I threw them down in anger.

Gregory.

If angry thou hast thrown these things away,

Then gently pick them up again.

Leon.

But, sir—

Gregory.

If 'tis too hard, I'll do it, friend, for thee.

(*He bends down.*)

Leon (intercepting him).

Oh, oh, my reverend sir, what are you doing?

(*He picks up the things.*)

Gregory.

So. Wear them both now, as is due to custom.

I like to see a man proclaim his trade.

As thou before me stoodst, bare of utensils,
 Thou mightst as well have been a good-for-nothing,
 About to roam the woods, intent on evil.
 Thy apron tells me thou'rt indeed my cook,
 And tells it thee. And now speak on, my son.

Leon.

Scarce know I what I was about to say.
 You quite confuse me.

Gregory.

That I did not mean.
 Bethink thee, friend, camest thou not to complain?
 The apron that lay there makes me believe it.

Leon.

Indeed, I did, sir, and complain about you.

Gregory.

So, so, about me? That, friend, I do daily.

Leon.

Not so, my lord, not so! And yet 'twas so!
 But not as Leon, I complain as cook—
 As your own cook, and as your servant, sir—
 That you so hate yourself.

Gregory.

O that were bad!
 Self-hatred worse than self-love is, indeed,
 For one should hate but what is wholly bad,
 And wholly bad, friend, honestly I'm not.

Leon.

How can you talk so! You and wholly bad!
 You're wholly good, yes, wholly, but for this —

Gregory.

And this is that I hate my very self?

Leon.

That to yourself you are not kind, a miser,
 Through self-denial, while profuse to others.
 I cannot stand this, I, who am your cook.
 You'll have to answer for your soul to Heaven,

Your body is, however, in my charge;
 I therefore say, in virtue of my office:
 Man has to eat, as knows whate'er takes breath,
 And what we eat affects our very being.
 A lenten feast will leave you weak in mind,
 While solid roast will make you strong and brave;
 A cup of wine gives joy and eloquence,
 While water puffs you with its emptiness.
 You're fit for nothing, sir, if you don't eat.
 I know this best, and therefore do I talk.
 While empty, I am stupid, dull and lazy,
 But breakfast sharpens mightily my wits,
 And then I am a match for any man.
 You understand?

Gregory.

Hast thou already eaten?

Leon.

Indeed, I have.

Gregory.

Ah, therefore so much wisdom!

Leon.

Wisdom or folly, truth at any rate.
 That haunch of venison, why, yesterday
 I had to send it back and sell it, yes,
 A morsel choice, such as you never saw.

Gregory.

Too precious, boy, it was for me.

Leon.

Too precious?

For such a man? Indeed? A fine excuse!
 Do you then know it cost as good as nothing?
 Yes, truly nothing. Will you have it now?
 It still is here, and free of charge. You see,
 It is—it is—a gift of pious folk,
 Indeed it is.

Gregory.

Liest thou perhaps?

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Leon.

O, well!

Gregory.

Woe to him who lies!

Leon.

Pshaw, pshaw!

Gregory.

Foolhardy boy!

Leon.

And if I lied, it was with good intent.

Gregory.

What knowest, mite, thou of intent and aim?

The One above determines the result.

Thou, daring wretch, art bound to speak the truth.

Leon.

Well, then, supposing, sir, I bought it for you,

Why all this noise? 'Twill not be done again.

I never dreamed that sinful such a deed!

Gregory.

Go hence now!

Leon.

Well, I say good-bye!

(He turns to go, but immediately comes back.)

One word!

Forgive me! Really, I could not help it.

So good a master that the smallest lie—

A white lie only—rouses him to anger—

Forgive me, sir, for I defend not lying—

I merely say, that such a one—a miser!

Fie! What is there in gold to make you love it?

Gregory.

Why think'st thou so?

Leon.

Permit me, reverend sir,

I saw you kiss a bag containing pence.

It stands up in a corner of your chest.

Down here you stint yourself, and hoard above.

Now, is this right? You see we're quits and even.

Gregory.

And that was it?

Leon.

Yes, that. Nor I alone,

Still other folk reprove you for it, sir,

And that, you see, much grieves a faithful servant.

Gregory.

This case, I see, demands full explanation.

A guardian of souls dare not mislead;

Far be it from me to cause evil talk.

Sit down, my boy, and hear now my defence.

Leon.

O sir!

Gregory.

Sit down, I say!

Leon.

Here, then, I'll sit, sir.

(He seats himself on the ground, in front of the bishop.)

Gregory.

Thou tak'st offence because I hoard my savings,

And kissed the money gained by self-denial.

Hear then! Perhaps thou wilt forgive me.

When—'tis now full a year—peace was concluded,

The longed-for peace, 'tween us and the barbarians

Beyond the Rhine, then justly gave and took

Both we and they—distrustful—hostages.

My nephew, he my only sister's son,

My Atalus, alas! was taken thus.

They, ruthless torn from home and all that's dear,

Sealed with their persons thus a lying peace.

He scarce had reached his jailors in that land

Beyond the Rhine—far is the place from Treves—

Where uncouth nature, which we here conceal,

In all its nakedness joins man to beast—

Scarce was he there, when war broke out anew,

In disregard of faith, and both sides took

Revenge on their poor, guiltless hostages.

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Thus lies my Atalus in durance vile,
Bound to do slavish service to a master.

Leon.

The Lord take pity!

Gregory.

I have offered ransom,
But hundred pounds in Frankish coin demand they
Who have him in their power. So much I own not.

Leon.

You're jesting, sir. Thrice hundred pounds and more
Yields to its head the church and town of Langres.

Gregory.

The poor own what it yields, not I indeed.
'Twas given to the bishop to give others;
He rules in his estate, but does not own it.
To dress and food, and what the body needs,
The bishop may lay claim like any one,
And what thereof he saves is his perhaps,
Perhaps, perhaps 'tis not. Know then I dared,
As often as a solitary coin
I saved from my allowance, to lay it by
As thou hast seen, and if sometimes I kissed it,
As thou reproachest me, know 'tis the ransom
For my poor Atalus, my son.

Leon (jumping up).

What's in the bag?

Gregory.

Near to ten pounds.

✓ *Leon.*

And hundred must you have?
Pray, with your leave, how long then must you save?
And meanwhile they may torture him to death.

Gregory.

I fear thou'rt right.

Leon.

No, sir, that will not do!
That must be managed differently, sir.

Had I ten fellows like me, sir, the devil!—
 Good Lord I meant, excuse me—I should free him.
 And even so, yes, I alone, if there
 Where he's imprisoned. Sir, what would you give me?—
 I use a common phrase—I ask no wage;
 What would you give if I could free your nephew?
 Were I but there I'd lie him out of it.

Gregory.

Woe to him who lies!

Leon.

Ah, sir, I crave your pardon,
 They'll never for the Lord's sake set him free.
 There's nothing left us then but speak the truth,
 And let him stay there. Pardon me! Good-bye!
 I meant no harm.

(He turns to go.)

Gregory.

O father, thou of all,
 To thy hand ever I commit my son!

Leon (returning).

My lord, forgive me; 'twas a sudden outburst.
 I know not how to talk with such as you.
 I almost had conceived a little plan,
 To play a trick upon those stupid devils
 Who guard your nephew in that savage land,
 And, if all went well, free him from his prison.
 But truth, my lord—

Gregory.

Thou shalt not bear false witness,
 Spoke the Almighty in a voice of thunder.

Leon.

And yet consider—

Gregory.

Woe to him who lies!

Leon.

And if your nephew in the meantime dies?

Gregory.

Then let him die, and I shall die with him.

Leon.

O it is pitiful! What have you done?
I, too, am now in prison, beaten, tortured,
Unfit to rest, to eat, and drink and sleep,
While absent that dear favorite of yours.
At Treves, you say, he is? Is it not so?

Gregory.

It is.

Leon.

What if the hostile camp I sought,
And begged to stay in place of Atalus?

Gregory.

The hostages are chosen from the mighty,
You scarce vouch for yourself, much less for others.

Leon.

That's true enough.—What then if Atalus,
Seizing a proper chance, escaped from prison?

Gregory.

That might he do without a sin, for war
Absolves from duty hostages of peace,
And he is wrongfully withheld by them.
But how can such a youth, reared tenderly,
Perhaps too tenderly, meet direful need,
Through deserts roam, o'ercome a threatening foe,
Face misery and want? Not Atalus!

Leon.

But if a sturdy fellow lent his aid,
A fellow such as I stood at his side,
And if he brought him to you safe and sound?—
Dismiss me from your service!

Gregory.

What mean'st thou?

Leon.

I'm bound for Treves.

Gregory.

Thou?

Leon.

To bring back your nephew.

Gregory.

Is this a time for jesting?

Leon.

God forgive you!

I did not jest, nor should your lordship do so.

In earnest am I. I'll produce your son.

Gregory.

And if you would, and bent upon your task,

With sly intent approached the enemy,

His house then entered, in your heart deceit,

Abused the confidence men owe to fellowmen;

If through your lies my Atalus you freed,


I should refuse to see him, send him back

Once more to prison, curse him and curse you.

Leon.

Agreed, my lord! Upon the terms you state.

Leon joins a pilgrim on his way to Treves and the country beyond. As they approach the dominions of Count Kattwald, who holds Atalus captive, Leon induces the pilgrim to accept him as his slave and to offer him to the count for a round sum, as a renowned cook. Kattwald, a glutton, eagerly agrees to the bargain, and Leon, by whetting his appetite and threatening to leave if crossed in any way, soon establishes complete control over the entire household. He is equally outspoken in his dealings with Edrita, the pretty daughter of the count, who is engaged to be married to Galomir, a boorish fellow, less than half-witted, whom she despises. When Leon first meets Atalus, and confides his plan of rescue to him, which requires absolute submission



to his commands, the proud knight vehemently protests against playing assistant to his uncle's kitchen-boy, but is forced to yield. Leon explains to Atalus his plans for their escape.

Atalus.

The house myself shall enter.

Leon.

Ah, indeed!

Atalus.

Had I a sword, the key were mine ere long.

Leon.

Had I, I should! We know this idle talk;
If wing'd were wishes, beggars ne'er would walk.
You may have other gifts, I do allow;
Astuter, though, am I. That house I'll enter,
While you may dig the ground to suit your taste.

Atalus.

The hardest task thus ever falls to me.

Leon.

You call that hardest? Do you, sir, indeed?

Atalus (pushing aside spade and hoe with his foot).

I shall not touch what's put to vulgar use;
I am the better man, the bolder task
Therefore is mine by right. The house I'll enter.

Leon.

And if you meet some inmate in the halls?

Atalus.

I'll seize him by the throat.

Leon.

And he'll shout murder.

Go lion-hunting, sir, but catching birds,
That leave to me. We'll do as I have planned.
I have to justify your uncle's trust,
Therefore my common sense must be obeyed,
Else go you back to tend again your horses.
Now swallow your disgust as best you can,

While meanwhile I shall try how swift my legs.
 The outlay for me I consider paid
 By service freely rendered here and there.
 Your uncle waits for you. Hear you his voice?
 Borne by the evening breeze, his prayer seems
 To come to us with surety of protection,
 And angels with their mighty wings shall follow
 Wherever we may go. But I must coax you
 As soothingly one coaxes little children.
 Believe me, digging is a task for nobles.
 Whatever you may do that's great and good,
 He who shall dig your grave will overcome
 Your victories, your graces, your great deeds.
 Here is the spade, now bear it like a sword,
 And here the hoe—but wait, not yet, not yet.

Edrita, who falls in love with Leon, connives at his
 escape and that of Atalus, and offers to join the fugitives.
 Leon protests.

Leon.

I've given a solemn promise to my lord
 To take no crooked step, to do no wrong
 In executing what dire need demands.
 If from the master I entice the slave,
 Ne'er from the father shall I steal the daughter,
 Thus adding to the curse upon our heads.

Edrita.

But listen!

Leon.

No, it cannot, must not be.

Atalus.

He has no sense.

Edrita.

Much more than you conceive.

He stands upon his right, is short and dry,
 And pauses just this side of what is wrong.
 His artless bearing, full of truest art,

Disarms his foe, inviting confidence,
 Awakening wishes which he contradicts
 With honest speech and studied vehemence.
 Such his intent, and such his actions are.

✓ Finding Leon obdurate, Edrita asks Atalus to take her with him, and he consents. Her knowledge of the country proves invaluable to the fugitives, whom she hides from their pursuers, among them Galomir. When they are about to cross a ferry, Leon's honest confession of who they are saves the lives of all of them, for the ferryman, a secret enemy of Kattwald's, would have drowned them had they—as Edrita wished to do—attempted to deceive him by pretending to be messengers of the count. They reach Metz and lie down to rest before its walls. Leon alone remains awake to watch over his companions.

Leon.

The sun still lingers, and the night is dark,
 And darkness also in my bosom reigns.
 There lie the two, in slumber wrapt like children,
 And I, as would a mother, watch o'er them.
 O that a part of that sweet happiness
 Which joys in what it does were also mine!

* * * * *

And when at last we shall confront my master!
 How suddenly his venerable presence
 Through night and darkness fills my erring eye,
 His parting word a warning 'gainst deceit!
 And yet how checkered has been all we've done!
 I dare not sift and winnow all my acts—
 A daughter snatched from her paternal home!
 And if not snatched, she was allowed to follow.
 How shall I stand before my master's gaze?

Kattwald's minions, led by Galomir, overtake the fugi-

tives. Leon admits that Kattwald's daughter is in his charge, and believing his case hopeless, invokes the aid of the Almighty. Suddenly there issues from the gates of the town a troop of soldiers. They are not, as Kattwald's men suppose, friendly to them nor, like them, worshippers of the old gods. Two days before, the town had surrendered to the Christians, and Gregory of Tours is now master of Metz. The soldiers are his own followers. Atalus rushes into the arms of his uncle. ✓

Gregory.

Now tell me, Atalus, camest thou alone?

Was he not with thee who was sent by me?

Atalus (pointing to Leon).

There stands who made me free, he, my protector.

Gregory.

Thou here, my madcap, thou, my faithful boy?

Here take my hand! To press, so, not to kiss.

Hast bravely lied, shown brazen impudence?

Dealt in deceit and fraud? Ah, well I know!

Leon.

Well, spotless did I not emerge throughout,

But we took care to do the best we could.

True always was alone our help—the Lord.

Gregory.

And that He is and shall be evermore.

(*To the leader of the Franks.*)

And in His holy name I now request you:

Release these men here, grant them free return,

Unless, perchance, some one should feel impelled

To join the Church.—I see they're not inclined.

Depart in peace! We know of no compulsion.

Truth only shall compel us all at last,

And she is not in need of outside help,

Else were she truth? May God direct your steps!

✓ Edrita comes forward and clears Leon from the suspicion of having induced her to leave her father. She asks to be received into the fold of the Church. Atalus lets Gregory know that he would be willing to attest his gratitude to Edrita by marrying her, and Gregory intimates that he would not withhold his consent; but Edrita pleads a desire to live in solitude for a while. Gregory asks her, at all events, to thank her protector. Atalus stretches out his hand to her, and Leon utters an exclamation of pain.

Gregory.

What ails thee, boy? Why dost thou stand apart?

Leon.

I'll draw then near—and ask to take my leave.

Gregory.

Thy leave, and why?

Leon.

Oh, trav'ling becomes habit

When one has seen a bit of this great world.

And then—you know—I always longed to serve

The king as soldier—

Gregory.

That's it then?

Leon.

It is.

Gregory.

Thou hast another reason.

Leon.

None, indeed.

Gregory.

Woe to him who lies!

Leon.

Yet one might think in truth—

Gregory.

Once more: Woe to the liar and the lie!

Leon.

Well, truly said, I like the maid myself.
If she turns from me, let another have her;
But merely to look on while she is wed—

Edrita.

Leon!

Leon.

Yes, you!

Edrita.

Leon and I.—

Leon.

How now?

Edrita.

Did I not from the start think well of thee?

Leon.

But what a cruel change there quickly followed!
You went with Atalus.

Edrita.

Was I not forced to go?

And you it was that cruelly repelled me.

Leon (pointing to Gregory).

Through fear of him who never would permit—
Could I come back to him a thief and robber?

Edrita.

And yet you stole my heart, and have it still.

Leon.

And yet you mean to marry?

Edrita.

I?

(Looking confidingly at the bishop, her hands folded as if in supplication.)

O no!

Gregory.

Who can the world's confused web unravel?
They all speak only truth, are proud of it,
Yet she deceives herself and him; he, me

And her. He lies because the others lied,
 And yet all speak the truth, yes, all of them.
 Ah, noxious weeds can ne'er be rooted out,
 We're lucky if some grain grows up with them.

(*To Atalus.*)

Things go not well with us, what say'st thou, son?

✓ *Atalus (after a pause).*

I say that he is welcome to the girl
 Who saved me, she who loveth him, alas!

Gregory.

Well speak'st thou, son, and that there be no doubt
 As to her husband's rank and future standing,
 I tell thee that two nephews now are mine;
 The king, I know, will gladly do the rest.
 Let him then safely woo the chieftain's child.
 Look not so sad, my son! Art thou aggrieved?
 Where all deception is thou wert deceived.
 I know a land where truth's enthroned supreme,
 And lie itself a checkered dress doth seem,
 By the Creater made, a passing thing,
 Which o'er the sinning crowd his hand did fling,
 That they be blinded not by truth's pure ray.
 Art thou so minded, follow God's old way.
 There reigns a bliss which no deception knows,
 And to the latest day but greater grows.
 And these two—

(*Pointing to Leon and Edrita.*)

Let them do as they propose.

Various causes contributed to the failure of Grillparzer's comedy. The subtle humor of the situation and the delicate shades of contrast between the austere wisdom of Gregory and the worldly shrewdness and frank gayety of Leon easily escape a popular audience. Moreover, the aristocratic patrons of the Burgtheater resented the subor-

dination of Atalus, the noble, to Leon, the kitchen-boy. The rôle of Galomir, at best a difficult one to impersonate, was placed in the hands of an actor who entirely mistook its character. He made of it a babbling idiot, whereas Grillparzer, according to his own statement, had intended to portray merely an undeveloped child of nature—low and crude indeed, but not devoid of all intelligence.

Grillparzer was deeply wounded by the fate of the comedy. He resolved that henceforth no more plays of his should be performed on the Vienna stage. Perhaps he was actuated not so much by resentment against the Vienna public as by a growing distrust of his powers to please that tribunal whose judgment he acknowledged as final. He withdrew more and more within himself, attended to his official duties with outward punctuality, even if with inward dissatisfaction, buried himself at home in his books, followed closely the literary and political happenings of the day, and thought and wrote much for the privacy of his desk. Vienna gradually forgot its foremost author. The plays which had delighted the audiences of the Burgtheater were no longer performed. And there was little demand for his printed works, either in Austria or elsewhere. Indeed, in Germany Grillparzer had never gained a foothold. "Ottokar," "Der Traum ein Leben," and "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn" proved unsuccessful wherever performed—in Berlin, Dresden, Munich, Mainz, etc. In Hamburg alone "Der Traum ein Leben" met with favor. Grillparzer, who, with all his Austrian patriotism, considered himself a German poet, felt keenly the indifference of the German public and the ignorant and malicious attacks of German critics. Again he sought consolation in

music. He was roused to great enthusiasm by the performances of Clara Wieck in 1837-38, and addressed to her one of his finest poems. He was similarly inspired by the concert singer, Mrs. Shaw, who appeared in Vienna the following winter.

But while seemingly silent, Grillparzer's dramatic muse was not idle. His intimate friends had long known that he was at work on a tragedy entitled "Libussa," and Bauernfeld besought him in a striking poem, published in a prominent journal, to break his silence, and let the public once more share his treasures.

Laube relates that when on one occasion he urged the poet to allow "Libussa" to be performed, Grillparzer finally said: "Well, you may have it if you can assure me after reading it that it will be a success on the stage." Laube would not risk the chance of a mere half-success, and returned the manuscript. Subsequently, however, in 1840, Grillparzer permitted the first act of "Libussa" to be played for some charitable purpose. It was most enthusiastically received, and all Vienna clamored for the continuation of the play, but the poet remained deaf to all entreaties.

Grillparzer once more felt the need of refreshing himself by travel in foreign countries. He was chiefly drawn toward Spain, that country with whose literature he was so familiar; but the Carlist war interfered with his project. In 1843 he decided to go to Greece, whose literary past was no less dear to him. But he had scarcely resolved upon the journey when he was seized with his usual hypochondriacal misgivings. When he was leaving Vienna, the Fröhlich sisters accompanied him to the

steamboat. "Kathi cried bitterly and was fairly beside herself from fear of this perilous journey. I tried to convince her," writes Grillparzer, "how senseless her apprehensions were, but secretly I had to confess to myself that the journey was even more senseless than her fears. The man on whose company I had counted did not make his appearance, and to undertake such a long and tedious journey, at my time of life and in my state of health, without a companion, and in the manner of a travelling student, bordered on the absurd. However, I had resolved to make the journey, and since its object was precisely to cure by force that hypochondriacal irresoluteness which is my principal weakness, I could not, in justice to myself, think of giving up my carefully prepared plan; and so I started out. But it would be difficult to describe my frame of mind. I felt like one who goes not upon, but into, the water."

The diary of Grillparzer's Oriental journey, consisting of hasty pencil memoranda, is far less interesting than the accounts of his other travels. Increasing years brought an ever present sense of the petty discomforts of travel and perhaps a lessened degree of impressionability. Moreover, he failed in the main purpose of his journey. The feeling of hostility toward Germans which then prevailed throughout Greece made it unsafe for him to visit Delphi and Mount Parnassus, and he left Athens disenchanted. But we gain interesting glimpses of the man in these unconventional jottings. He reveals himself in all the sincerity of his nature, which never failed to impress others. The Countess Hahn-Hahn, in her day a noted writer, who met him at Constantinople and Smyrna, speaks of him thus

in her Oriental letters: "Grillparzer is a pleasant and simple man, who does not look like the author of that gruesome tragedy ('Die Ahnfrau'). I am glad I shall now find in Vienna, which city I have always been so fond of, one more agreeable acquaintance; for I enjoy Grillparzer as I do all persons who, with all their great intellectual gifts, have remained as simple and unaffected as God has created them."

In the course of the following years Vienna gradually awoke to the consciousness of Grillparzer's importance. Leading writers spread his fame; a medal was awarded to him; and in 1844 a public celebration in honor of his fifty-third birthday took place. Even the government began to take notice of his growing popularity and granted him, through the minister of finance, the liberal Baron Kübeck, an increase of salary of about a hundred dollars. But in spite of all this tardy recognition of his merits, when the position of chief librarian of the Imperial Library, for which he had once before vainly applied, again became vacant, his claims to the place were ignored, and the dramatist Baron Münch ("Friedrich Halm"), a writer of far less ability, but with an influential aristocratic backing, was appointed.* Grillparzer felt this slight keenly. "Such are the ways of the world," he wrote in a pathetic poem, "but I have one consolation: If I have achieved nothing, I have remained true to myself."

Public opinion in Vienna condemned the action of the government with great outspokenness. The liberal current which ushered in the movement of 1848 was in the air. Grillparzer himself took part in several of the popular

*Halm's drama, "Der Sohn der Wildniss," translated into English as "Ingomar the Barbarian," was familiar to American theatre-goers of a bygone generation.

gatherings which preceded the storm. This participation in political affairs, particularly the signing of a petition asking for the abolition of the censorship, was the source of much subsequent trouble to him. His views and aspirations were misinterpreted, and he brought upon himself censure alike from liberals and reactionaries. The fact was that Grillparzer, while liberal in his convictions, was, like Goethe, an enemy of violence, whether in political and social life or in literature and art. He was, moreover, as we have seen, devotedly attached to the reigning dynasty, as the outward representative of Austria's greatness, while keenly alive to its shortcomings and ardently longing for an era of progress. (He had no faith in the unguided wisdom of the masses.) His "Recollections of the Revolution of 1848" throw a vivid light, not only upon his own sentiments, but upon the attitude of not a few prominent and patriotic Austrians toward that memorable rising. His emphatic disclaimer of any participation in the events leading up to it cannot, as we have seen, be taken literally.

XVI

GRILLPARZER AND THE REVOLUTION OF 1848

"In writing my recollections of the year of the Revolution," Grillparzer says, "I am met at the outset by a seemingly fatal obstacle. I took no part whatever in the events of that year. I not only kept aloof from the preparations for the rising and from participation in the final outbreak itself, but a sentiment which has its origin in my inmost nature deterred me from following all the difficult steps that presented themselves in its course. Men who have all their lives busied themselves purely with matters relating to the arts and sciences are seized, when face to face with a state of hopeless confusion, by a feeling of disgust which penetrates to their very vitals; and nothing, as is well known, is so paralyzing to mental effort as such disgust.

"But what justification for one's conduct does such a frame of mind offer? Can I say that I was satisfied with the state of things prior to March, 1848? Did I desire no change? Do I believe that one is not bound to lend a hand in correcting base and intolerable conditions? While giving the only possible answer to these questions, I must still have due regard for practical considerations. If the Austrian monarchy were a compact state, inhabited by a homogeneous people; or if its various races were animated by a wish to live and remain together; or if the time had

been favorable to the furtherance of moderate aims and to a prudent restraint after the attainment of the end, I should gladly have lent my aid to every effort toward reform. Or—not to credit myself with too much energy—I should at least have supported every such attempt, even if a forcible one, with my good wishes and with whatever moral influence over my countrymen I possessed. But in reality the contrary of all this was true at the time. Poland had already revolted, Hungary was merely awaiting the signal to rise; the ridiculous question of the supremacy of nationalities had imparted a centrifugal movement to all the races of the Austrian monarchy. The inflammatory writings of the last ten years and the fresh impressions of the February Revolution in France had worked upon the masses to such a degree that any violent outbreak was certain to transcend all bounds of reason.

“The emperor Francis, narrow-minded and wedded to the old régime, was determined to introduce no reforms of any kind. With all his political shortsightedness, he had a sharp eye for what was needed to further his immediate ends, and he therefore gave the police a latitude in the execution of oppressive measures without a parallel in modern society. If he made an exception in favor of Hungary, this was due partly to the force of habit—for Hungary had always had a constitution—and partly to a hope that the aristocratic principle in vogue in that country might prove a make-weight against the democratic tendencies of the time. He forgot, however, that in a time of popular excitement every form of enthusiasm not justified by reason is sure to end in swelling the general current, as proved to be the case in Hungary, whose aristocrats

became speedily the most furious of democrats. But at all events, Hungary enjoyed her liberties, while the other provinces groaned under an iron despotism.

"Prince Metternich was during the reign of the emperor Francis a decided opponent of the narrow policy of his master. A man of native charm of mind and manner, he early gave rein to his frivolous tendencies, and throughout his life he was a slave to his desires—not necessarily in the evil sense of the word. Metternich ridiculed, in conversation with his intimates, the petty ways of Austrian officialdom, and his enthusiasm for Lord Byron and kindred spirits showed plainly how foreign to his native cast of mind was the thought of trampling upon human rights. But at the time of the death of the emperor Francis, Metternich was already old, indolent and supercilious. Ten years previously he might possibly have lent himself to the granting of reform measures, and considering his unexampled influence over the power on the throne, he might perhaps have carried them through. Now, however, he could think of nothing better than to continue in the old rut. The policy thus pursued without conviction he dignified with the name of "system," and in continuing this system he lost all the mental elasticity which had given such lustre to the first part of his career. The mere fact that it was he alone who supported the miserable president of police, Count Sedlnitzky, ought to be sufficient to silence all panegyrists of Metternich."

But obnoxious as was Metternich's system at all times, Grillparzer found that in practice the execution of the police laws, particularly as regards the censorship, grew much more lax under Francis's successor, Ferdinand.

"Prohibited foreign books were circulated in Austria as freely as in any part of the world, and none more so than those described as particularly dangerous. The press itself, it is true, was subjected to strict surveillance. But Prince Metternich now and then took pleasure in giving evidences of his liberal sentiments by allowing men of European reputation, like Baron Hammer-Purgstall,* whom he was in the habit of inviting to his house, to print pretty much what they liked. And the government was far from displeased to see Austrian writers of some renown, poets in particular, publish their works in other countries. All they had to do to remain unmolested, was to assume a fiction of anonymity, by shortening their name by a syllable or choosing some transparent pseudonym. Indeed, those in power felt perhaps a secret satisfaction in seeing that the rigor of the laws which they thought necessary did not interfere with the production of admirable literary works. Writers who dealt with purely political matters, however, were treated far less leniently."

An interesting passage in these recollections relates to the founding of the Vienna Academy of Sciences. According to Grillparzer, the world was indebted to the peasants of Galicia for this famous institution. His account is as follows:

"Baron Hammer, who, led by his vanity, was burning with desire to be called president of an academy, had long been moving heaven and earth to found such an institution. But the ideas of this rather flighty and restless,

*The Orientalist Joseph von Hammer-Purgstall, in his day an authority on Turkish, Arabic, and Persian literature.

although decidedly able man were scarcely ever taken seriously. About this time, however, Prof. Endlicher took up the matter. He very sensibly modified the plan by proposing, instead of an academy, for which all the conditions were wanting, a private society for the promotion of common literary endeavors, which was to have the support of the state. To a meeting held for this purpose representative men from every branch of literature were invited, and I was chosen for the department of *belles-lettres*. From the intellectual stature of these leaders of thought one could easily infer what a sorry lot the rank and file would be. I endeavored at first to keep out all poets, including myself, from a society such as that proposed, all the more so as my companions in poetry, Baron Zedlitz, Baron Münch, and perhaps also Archbishop Pyrker, occupied official positions which rendered it altogether out of the question for them to join any society which the court might not approve of. The majority of the men present, however, did not agree with me, and I had to withdraw my objections. A petition to the authorities was drawn up and handed in, and there was no further talk about the matter. Just at this time the insurrection in Galicia broke out. The peasants murdered and pillaged, and devastated the land, evidently with the connivance of the local authorities, a circumstance for which it would be rash to blame them, inasmuch as the state authorities had neglected to take any precautions to prevent the outbreak, so that the officials of the province found their only safety in letting the peasants vent their fury against the landed proprietors. A cry of horror rang throughout Europe when the fiendish occurrences became known. Suddenly,

like lightning from a clear sky, came the news that an Academy of Sciences was to be founded. Prince Metternich evidently sought to divert public attention from the happenings in Galicia by putting a liberal plaster on the sore wounds of the state, and for this purpose such a concession to science was the very best possible makeshift he could have resorted to."

From the window of his office Grillparzer had a view of the opening scenes of the revolution on the fateful 13th of March, 1848. At first there was merely a gathering of forty or fifty young students on the Ballplatz in front of the State Chancellery, and one of their number, who had been hoisted upon the shoulders of a comrade, began an address, in full view of a triple row of soldiers. "The whole," wrote Grillparzer, "made a great impression upon me. The indifference with which these young men stationed themselves there like sheep ready to be slaughtered, without taking the slightest notice of the military, had something sublime about it. These are heroic children, I said to myself. After a while the soldiers began to fire upon the people. Whoever gave the signal brought the monarchy to the brink of ruin by making a revolution out of boyish pranks. From that moment on there was no going backward, especially after the dismissal of Metternich, who, with all his faults, was still the only man who had the ability and energy necessary to stem the tide. Some victim the people were determined to have, but for that the president of the police, Count Sedlnitzky, would have sufficed, a man universally hated, and justly held responsible for most of our evils."

Grillparzer speaks of the behavior of the people during

the first days of the revolution as "charming." "It was the gayest revolution imaginable. Favored by the most beautiful spring weather, the entire population was in the streets from morning till night. When the crowd reached the vicinity of the imperial Burg, where the military with their cannon had been stationed, there arose loud shouts of joy, which those within the Burg interpreted as threats against their lives; so that they conceded everything demanded by some impudent fellows, who represented themselves as deputies of the people. In fact it became the fashion for any one who chose to do so, to demand admission into the Burg, bring his fist down upon the table, and insult the archdukes to their faces.

"Those who were inspired by the sincerest conviction, and who at the same time acted most absurdly, were the students, who considered themselves the heroes of the occasion. As there seemed to be some hesitation about granting a constitution, they wanted to storm the Burg. They thought less of victory than of the glory of dying for the cause of liberty. They scrambled for the honor of leading in the assault. I have myself seen how the younger and weaker ones among them asked to be placed in front, so that, after they had been shot down, the older and stronger might be able to hurl themselves upon the guns before there was time to reload them. One of the professors, who was far from sharing in the popular excitement, said to me: 'I am convinced they will storm the Burg.' At last the promise of a constitution was given. The emperor drove through the streets. He was everywhere greeted with shouts of joy, cheers, expressions of love and devotion—the outburst of true and loyal hearts.

"I myself was doomed to remain passive. My convictions being in every respect opposed to the general enthusiasm, there was nothing for me to do but to keep aloof. I hailed the advent of liberty in a poem to my country, which, however, contained the most emphatic warning against the folly of imitating the silly and wicked doings of France and Germany. The poem was well received, including the warning, although no one seemed to have the faintest idea that any warning was needed. I may, perhaps, take this opportunity of justifying my lack of enthusiasm for the cause of liberty. Despotism has ruined my life, at least my literary life; I may therefore claim to have a just perception of the value of liberty. But the revolutionary movement of 1848 threatened to destroy my fatherland, which I loved with almost childish devotion, and the struggle for liberty seemed to me particularly ill-timed. In Germany, which ever dreams of progress, education had developed such general incapacity, unnaturalness and exaggeration, together with conceit, that there seemed no hope of any rational and conservative outcome. . . . Liberty calls, above all, for sound common sense and self-restraint, and these were lamentably lacking in Germany."

The inconsistencies of reasoning apparent in this plea illustrate in a far less degree Grillparzer's distrust of his countrymen and the liberal movement throughout Europe than his habitual distrust of himself when called upon to act. Penned in a hypochondriacal hour, and never intended for publicity, these self-revelations must be judged not by themselves, but in the light furnished by Grillparzer's bearing throughout his life. If he distrusted the

immaturity of youthful enthusiasm, however laudable its aims, he had still less faith in the promises of the great; and he was no more inclined to seek the applause of the populace than to win the favor of ministers and kings.

His political vision, it is true, was not always clear. It was not infrequently clouded by prejudice, and he was unconsciously influenced by that dramatic instinct which fastened upon certain picturesque incidents of Metternich's career—such as his admiration for Byron—and exaggerated their importance. His cooler judgments of men and measures, however, were prompted by a profound love of truth, which triumphed over personal whims. For his real estimate of Metternich we must turn to an exhaustive essay, written in 1839, in which the claims of the then all-powerful chancellor to the title of statesman are examined and rejected with merciless logic. He sums up the case practically in the words of Napoleon at St. Helena, who spoke of Metternich contemptuously as “bugiardo, bugiardo e niente che bugiardo” (a fraud, a fraud, and nothing but a fraud).

“This sounds harsh,” says Grillparzer, “but if one translates the somewhat coarse language of the barracks into that of polite society, and calls him an intriguer, an intriguer, and nothing but an intriguer, one is pretty near the truth. His imaginary and pretended assumption of convictions and principles had only this pitiful result, that by dint of sheer repetition he finally began to believe in his own falsehoods—a state of mind which always marks the point where the cheat merges into the one who is being cheated. Metternich did not escape this fate, and he who began as *gran tacaño* (arrant knave) finished as Don

Quixote." This characterization of Metternich recurs also in Grillparzer's well-known "anticipatory epitaph" on him:

"Hier liegt, für seinen Ruhm zu spät,
Der Don Quixote der Legitimität,
Der Falsch und Wahr nach seinem Sinne bog,
Zuerst die Andern, dann sich selbst betrog;
Vom Schelm zum Thoren ward bei grauem Haupte,
Weil er zuletzt die eignen Lügen glaubte."

(Here lies—too late for fame, the muse insists—
The Don Quixote of Legitimists,
Who in the field of politics
The true and false would deftly mix,
A knave when young, a fool became when old,
Believing all the lies himself had told.)

The bitterness of Grillparzer's arraignment of Germany is but the protest of the Austrian patriot against the domineering spirit of a country which, nevertheless, it was the wish of his life to see indissolubly linked with his own in common intellectual endeavor. It is true enough, however, that, as Laube says, he lived in a state of constant irritation toward Germany, and it is therefore not surprising that a North German critic could write: "Grillparzer is an Austrian poet, who happened not to have written in the Magyar or Czech tongue, but in German. His works cannot be considered as manifestations of the German spirit." And yet in dozens of passages Grillparzer gave utterance to his admiration of those German traits in which his own countrymen were lacking. "Let us send our young men to North Germany," he wrote, "that they may learn something, and let

them send young North Germans to us, that they may warm up." No one indeed understood and deplored the weaknesses of his beloved Austria better than he. "Catholicism," he said, "is at the bottom of all our troubles. Give us a history of two hundred years as a Protestant state, and we shall be the most powerful and most gifted of all German peoples. As it is, we have only talent for music and—the Concordat."

Prof. Johannes Volkelt has in his philosophical analysis of Grillparzer's genius and character laid bare the causes of the mutual misunderstanding between him and his German critics. "In his relations with Germany," he says, "we are confronted with his lack of skill in practical matters." He repeatedly declined the offer of the firm of F. A. Brockhaus to publish his works, and stuck to his inactive Austrian publisher. His works would have been far better known in Germany had he accepted that offer. His poems, moreover, were never printed anywhere but in Austrian periodicals, and he published no edition of his collected works. And just as he neglected in Weimar the invaluable opportunity to draw closer to Goethe, so he never knew how to enter into literary ties which might have been of value to him in Germany. Such scorn of the dictates of common prudence certainly reveals his pure and unselfish principles, and in particular the chasteness of his relations toward Germany; but at the same time his conduct shows that he was neglectful of his duty toward himself."

If the poem addressed by Grillparzer to his countrymen in March, 1848 ("Mein Vaterland"), with its subdued acclaim of the new era, passed almost unnoticed, the lines

to Fieldmarshal Radetzky, written in the following June, created an extraordinary sensation. The stirring words:

"Glück auf, mein Feldherr, führe den Streich!
Nicht bloss um des Ruhmes Schimmer,
In deinem Lager ist Oesterreich,
Wir Andern sind einzelne Trümmer."

(All hail, my general! Strike the blow,
By glory's call unflattered!
Thy camp alone holds Austria,
We are but fragments scattered.)

met with an instantaneous response throughout Austria, and far beyond. The government and the army hailed the poet as the saviour of his country. His verses were translated into all the languages of the monarchy; Radetzky had them read aloud to his assembled officers, and they were equally admired at the court of Berlin, particularly by the Prince of Prussia, subsequently Emperor William I. The Austrian army expressed its gratitude by presenting Grillparzer with a goblet, and the prime minister, Prince Felix Schwarzenberg, called on him personally, to hand him the order of Leopold, which the emperor had conferred upon him.

Public opinion in different parts of the monarchy recognized, on the whole, the patriotic motive which had prompted the verses; but Vienna itself resented Grillparzer's fervent glorification of the military power. Revolutionists denounced him as a reactionary, and for years to come even moderate liberals regarded with a certain suspicion the man who had thus earned the enthusiastic encomium of the old régime.

Grillparzer was unmoved alike by praise and censure. He was indifferent to the personal consequences of his spontaneous act. During the turbulent days of the revolution he had gone with the Fröhlichs to Baden, a summer resort near Vienna, and he did not return to the city until order was restored. Then he took up his abode with three of the sisters (the fourth was married) in the modest dwelling, up four flights of stairs, in the Spiegelgasse, where he resided for more than twenty years, until his death.

Amid the storm and stress of the revolution one of Grillparzer's most beautiful works, the story, "Der arme Spielmann" (The Poor Musician), which had appeared in 1847, was forgotten. But its intrinsic merits secured for it universal recognition when the days of uproar were over. "Der arme Spielmann," with its simple pathos, its deep insight into the soul of a being possessed by a passion for music, but without a spark of musical talent, is considered one of the gems of German fiction. It contains some telling autobiographic touches and could have been written only by one as steeped in music as Grillparzer was. The only other story which he wrote, "Das Kloster bei Sendomir," is more elaborate as to plot, but artistically far less perfect than "Der arme Spielmann." It has been dramatized by Gerhart Hauptmann, under the title of "Elga."

XVII

ESTHER

THANKS to the intelligent exertions of Laube, the early fifties witnessed a resurrection of Grillparzer's dramatic fame. "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen" was triumphantly produced in 1851, but the success of the tragedy which twenty years previously had been so coolly received surprised rather than gratified him. When told of it, he merely shook his head, and asked what accident was responsible for the changed verdict of the public. Even the enthusiastic plaudits which accompanied the performance of "Das goldene Vlies," a little later on, failed to remove his scepticism. "Strange indeed!" he exclaimed. And when success followed success, and "Ottokar" and "Ein treuer Diener" made an equally deep impression on the new generation of theatre goers, he was merely moved to the pathetic remark: "Too late, it is too late." There can be no doubt, however, says Laube, that secretly the growth of his fame pleased him as much as the former indifference of the public had hurt him.

Whatever gratification he may have felt was late in his life enhanced by the enthusiastic reception, at the Burgtheater, of his "Esther," a dramatic fragment in two acts, which he allowed to be performed on the 28th of April, 1868. Perhaps no other play of his achieved so great a triumph, and its subsequent equally enthusiastic re-

ception in Germany paved the way for the final recognition of his merits on the part of the greater fatherland.

"Esther," in the opinion of most critics, bears the impress of the period of Grillparzer's maturest powers. It is generally conceded that if the last three acts had kept the promise of the first two, "Esther" would have been the equal of his best plays. Grillparzer was familiar with Racine's drama, as well as with Lope de Vega's "La hermosa Ester" and Godinez's "Aman y Mardoqueo." After reading Lope de Vega's work, in 1828, he wrote: "This man takes hold of me more than is good for a modern poet"; but he emancipated himself in his own "Esther" from all his predecessors in the dramatic treatment of the Biblical story. His Esther bears a certain resemblance to the character of Hero in "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen," both in her rebellious attitude toward her uncle, and in the sudden flaming up of an affection artfully suppressed at first. It would have been difficult for the poet, had he finished his play, to surpass the dramatic interest of the scene in which Esther and the king first meet.

Haman, in whom Grillparzer satirizes the empty-headed, conscienceless courtier who had become so familiar to him, is confronted with the failure of his scheme to find a wife for the king:

Haman.

It would appear my plan suits not the king.

'Tis hard indeed to gauge a master's whims.

The faithful servant finds his own reward

In knowing that he strove for what is good.

(To the councillors.)

The Lord be with you, gentlemen!

(They turn away from him.)

They hear not,

That is to say, they turn as blows the wind.

What stupid girls those were, devoid of sense,

And veritable scarecrows in appearance!

Have Persia's handsome wives no fairer daughters?

God willed it so. But those in whom I trusted,

Who for me bartered and the goods selected,

I mean to smite them with my wrathful sword,

Though who in future is to frown or tremble

Is still in doubt.

(To the councillors.)

If so you please, my lords—

(They depart.)

They manifestly think me lost. O God,

Is there no hope?

(He notices Esther.)

A single one remains.

The master after all saw but the herd,

That swarming in the halls were shown to him.

The best of them and most conspicuous,

Those wisely set apart in special rooms,

Are still unseen, above all this one here.

She has good breeding, sense and mother wit.

But give me worldly shrewdness, first of all.

(He approaches Esther.)

My child, the present hour means much to us.

Esther.

To us?

Haman.

To you and me. The king is near.

Esther.

That is important only to yourself.

Haman.

To me? And if his choice should fall on you?

Esther.

I do not fear to please his Majesty.

Haman.

She does not fear! O monstrous lack of sense!
 And yet not badly said. At least 'tis novel.
 Such speech finds favor. Others did proclaim
 Their worth from house-tops; she, she "does not fear."
 Continue so, and if this be deceit,
 See that you stick to it without a break;
 If truth—why, then indeed 'twere rather worse—
 Yet even truth may sometimes useful be.
 Above all, bear in mind my well-meant service,
 I planned thy welfare—as of all the rest—
 And all my happiness turns on this day,
 For at a court there is no less, nor more;
 You please or displease, and if you displease,
 Your life is over, long before your death.
 Think of all this, and shrewdly act, my child.
 I feel as though I ought to bow before thee,
 And grasp thy knees in my extremity.
 Who comes? The king himself. The end is near.

Esther.

I almost pity this weak, silly man.

(Enter king with attendants, who retire.)

King.

Here do I find you, my sagacious councillor,
 Whose counsel this time scarcely counselled well?
 And for good reason. We all seek our like,
 And vulgar counsel gives who vulgar is.
 So are they all, all. When they tell their lies,
 They think them wisdom. Treachery is prudence,
 And harshness, purpose firm. Be pitiless
 And deaf when fellow-men implore your help,
 'Tis proof of vast design that scorns the small.
 And if, perchance, taught in their daily traffic,
 Or by a whispering friend, a trick or two,

A something others know not, each believes
He's wiser far than all the sages were.
My palace shall be cleared of what defiles it.
One useful purpose anger serves, I see:
It stirs to action our dejected mood.

(To Esther.)

For thee, my child, there's nothing more to do,
Permission is now granted thee to leave.

(Esther bows and turns toward the door.)

King.

Thou go'st so gladly I suspect forsooth
That forcibly they brought thee to this spot,
Thus adding guilt to previous wrong and crime.

(Turning to Haman.)

Esther.

Not forcibly.

King.

Then camest thou willing here?

Esther.

I came, as now I go, because commanded.

King.

And without sorrow for thy blighted hope?

Esther.

Hope?

King.

Why you all were called, thou knowest well.

Esther.

Say, rather, that my fear is now dispelled.
This man, however—though what he proposed
Lacked sense—erred less by ill-considered ways
Than from excess of zeal, as seems to me.

King.

You find his project, too, devoid of sense?

Esther.

What else?

King (to Haman).

Hear'st thou?

(To Esther.)

Still, on the other hand—

Thou, girl, seem'st wise—and yet it may be said,
And natural I deem it, that a man
Who droops when separated from his wife,
Be other women shown, to choose anew.

(To Haman.)

Thou shouldst not listen, go!

Haman.

But—

King.

I have spoken!

It galls me e'er to hear my voice's sound,
An empty echo, as my sole response.

(Exit Haman.)

Thou owest still an answer to my question.

Esther.

My lord is jesting with his lowly maid.

King.

What wouldst thou then suggest in such a case?

Esther.

I?

King.

Thou, I say.

Esther.

I—nothing.

King.

That were cruel.

Esther.

The sick are to be healed, those low in spirits
One safely leaves to time and to the world.

King.

And if the world have grossly sinned against them?

Esther.

We sin so much, my lord, against the world,
That in the reckoning we are still its debtors.

King.

Thou dost not flatter.

Esther.

Of what use were flattery?

King.

We kings, it has been said, upon the world
Bestow such happiness that all its gifts
Returned to us still leave the debt unpaid.

Esther.

It may not be quite so.

King.

Think'st thou? Perhaps.

But there remains unanswered still the question:
What action is there called for in my case?
Thou disapprov'st my choosing one of many,
Nought else remains but turning to the one.

Esther.

So be it.

King.

And the one you mean should be—?

(*Aside.*)

I guess her answer, and all this pretence
Of seeming innocence, straightforward speech,
Was but the mask of a concealéd purpose.

(*Loud.*)

You seem to hesitate.

Esther.

Not so, my king.

King.

And this one, name her! Speak, without delay!
Her name assuredly you know.

Esther.

Vashti,

Your queen.

King (in surprise).

In truth! Her name do you pronounce?

Esther.

O call her back, call back your happiness!
 To seek new ties is seeking a new venture.
 With her alone your life resumes its course.
 And as the wound, closed by a skilful hand,
 Invisibly and slowly heals at last,
 The fibres torn together knit again,
 The inborn healing power building bridges
 That lead from cell to cell, supplying blood—
 So shall you stand, once more restored to health,
 In all your former manly strength and beauty.
 Say not, she has defects, lacks this or that,
 For woman is but part of man's own self.
 And who has e'er cut off his arm in spite,
 Because he liked it not, lopped off his foot
 Because too long it seemed, gouged out his eye
 Because 'twas brown, not blue? Bear your light load,
 That friendly hands may help you bear the heavy.
 And if you found the crown of womankind,
 Could you bestow on her the recollections
 Which she inherits from the days of youth,
 When life first blossomed, pliant every wish,
 And sudden impulse, sweet alike and bitter,
 Transformed her, as is changed the grafted branch,
 One with the stem through undivided fruit?
 Old age, my lord, as manifests my uncle,
 Is wise and prudent; youth, howe'er, is sacred.
 Preserve your own by keeping her you loved.

King.

Speaks thy experience thus?

Esther.

What means your question?

King.

Know'st thou what love is?

Esther.

And why should you ask?

Our talk does not concern me, but yourself;

My own way easily I find alone.

King.

What is thy name?

Esther.

'Tis simply Esther, sir,

Though I am called Hadassa by our neighbors.

I need no counsellor, advice or help,

Alone I rid myself of vexing cares;

But you, upon your solitary height,

Who bear the burden of the multitude,

You need a helping hand, you need the wife

To whom you may transfer your weighty load,

Exclaiming: "Stop, that I may pause and breathe!"

O that—if you mistrust the men here at your court—

You might approach me, saying: Go, Hadassa,

And bring her back who brought me happiness,

The longed-for friend whom no one can replace!

King.

Thou know'st then where she is?

Esther.

Ah, you suspect me!

You look for faith, and have it not? Seek trust

While harboring suspicion? Poor, poor prince!

Fair things and good you buy not, but exchange.

Receiving just as much as you have given.

King.

I tell thee that thou knowest not the woman

For whom thou speak'st, else less warm were thy praise;

For she is proud,

Esther.

Of you.

King.

Revengeful,

Esther.

Give her no cause to seek revenge.

King.

And jealous—

Esther.

The jealousy of woman e'er is love,
Man oft is jealous but from vanity.

King.

Well, then, she loves me not. Hear'st thou, Hadassa?
She loves me not, nor ever truly loved.
Thou shak'st thy head. Dost thou believe me not?

Esther.

O that were sad indeed!

King.

It is, it is, Hadassa.

Esther.

Yet do I think, my lord—

King.

What?

Esther.

That one loves

What love deserves.

King.

Do you?

Esther.

I mean the queen.

King.

And all this say'st thou with averted gaze?

Esther.

Why should I talk, indeed? If wrong my thought,
Advice were useless, action were belated.
But I had better go. My uncle waits,
Perhaps my tarrying has made him anxious.
I barely know the door by which I entered.

King (pointing to the side-door on the right).

I think 'tis this.

Esther.

Farewell, my sovereign, then.

And if—

King.

What mean'st thou?

Esther.

If too bold my speech—

King.

Not bold, but true. I hope thy very silence
Spoke but the truth.

Esther.

I know not what you mean.

Again, my lord, farewell!

King.

Farewell, Hadassa!

(Exit Esther.)

King.

Haman!

Haman (entering).

My gracious lord!

King.

Who is that maiden?

Whence came she? Are her parents known to you?

Haman.

If you command, search shall be made at once.

King.

No, stay!

Haman.

And are you still displeased, my lord?

King (extending his hand to him to be kissed).

Chance oft corrects the sins of blundering wit.

(He motions to Haman to retire. Esther returns.)

Esther.

No exit here! A wilderness of rooms
That multiply in gorgeous repetition,

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And servants everywhere whose silent bow
Accords with all this solitude and silence!
No exit 's here, my lord!

King.

An entrance then!

Know these were my own rooms!

Esther.

O woe is me!

King.

Dost thou think so? And if it were thy lot
In future in these very rooms perhaps—

Esther (pointing to the middle door and approaching it).

Here is the door through which I came—I see it.

King (placing himself before the door).

You shall not stir until you answer me.
What if I said to you: Remain, Hadassa,
And try to find me, as you I have found?

Esther.

You know that I must leave.

King (obstructing her way).

Not ere you speak.

Esther.

Not noble is your act!

King.

A word you utter

Which opens like a magic wand all gates.
Force reigns not here.

(Retiring from the door.)

And you are free to go.

But yet you leave not—linger? Ah, Hadassa,
Though longing now to leave, yet scarcely gone,
Thou wilt be seized with longing to return!
Affection born of equal sympathies
Does not touch one and leave the other free.

A close approach means closeness of the two,
And you must bear what you to others do.

(Pointing to the middle door.)

Outside the court's confused noise prevails,
Here stillness reigns

(Pointing to the side door.)

and quiet contemplation;

'Tis pleasant here to gather fruitful thought,
Nor is there wanting what decorum calls for.

(At a signal from him slaves enter, who range themselves on both sides. One of them holds a golden wreath.)

See them fulfil a task beforehand taught.

They bear a golden wreath meant for the chosen,
And know not that in vain has been my choice.

(He takes the wreath.)

What if you tried how well the wreath becomes?

(She makes a motion as if in protest, and he gives the wreath back to the slave.)

Ah, well I knew, no happiness awaits me,
A lonely road I follow to my tomb.

(Esther seizes the wreath and places it upon her head.)

King.

Hadassa!

(As she is about to remove the wreath.)

Pause! Stay! Do not touch the wreath!

Decide not now, Hadassa! Not this moment!

Take her in there, for rest and ripe reflection!

Myself to yon apartments shall retire,

And if when has an hour elapsed I come,

And once more ask: Hadassa, speak!

Esther (who stops at the threshold).

My lord!

King.

Enough! Thy voice has clearly told me all.

Away ye all, away! Myself shall lead her.

(Clasping her within his arms.)

And what thou mean'st to do confide to me!

Many have been the conjectures as to why Grillparzer abandoned the continuation of a play so admirably begun. According to Frau von Littrow-Bischoff ("Aus dem persönlichen Verkehre mit Grillparzer"), he intended to treat in the remaining acts the relations of church and state and make the play, as it were, a plea for religious tolerance. Ehrhard suggests that Grillparzer probably dreaded a conflict with the censorship, which would certainly have been provoked by the liberties he intended to take with the Bible story. More likely still, the authorities would have objected to the play for political reasons. For even in the first two acts the allusions to existing conditions in Austria were obvious. But like Schiller's "Demetrius," Grillparzer's "Esther" has taken its place in German literature. Even as a torso, it retains its hold on the audiences wherever the German language is spoken. Perhaps no other of Grillparzer's works has evoked such unanimous praise from modern critics. Even Wilhelm Scherer, who could never free himself from a certain critical coolness toward his great compatriot, testifies that of all his plays "Esther" made the deepest impression upon him.

In 1856 Grillparzer retired from the government service with the title of court councillor and a pension equal to his full salary (about \$1,000). Austria henceforth endeavored to make amends for her former neglect of her greatest genius. At the festivities connected with the centenary of Schiller's birth, in 1859, he received an ovation as enthusiastic as it was unpremeditated. He was present at the banquet and listened to the speeches in honor of the poet, but when he noticed that the occasion was

seized for paying tribute to his own achievements, he quietly left the hall, without giving any outward token of satisfaction. Having been called to the Austrian House of Peers by the emperor, under the Schmerling ministry, in 1861, he took his new duties seriously and attended the sittings on all important occasions, voting consistently with the Liberal Centrists, the party that upheld the supremacy of the German element. During the great debate preceding the abrogation of the Concordat, in 1868, a deep impression was produced by the appearance of the aged poet in the Upper House, arm in arm with his friend Count Anton Auersperg ("Anastasius Grün"), both among the most pronounced opponents of the compact with Rome. The great public ovations in honor of his eightieth birthday disturbed and annoyed, rather than pleased, him. While all the celebrities of Vienna were assembled in the hall of the Musikverein to do homage to Austria's great poet "he sat," as Laube relates, "in his little room, a few blocks away, intent upon his book. I found him there, thus occupied, immediately after the celebration, about which I wanted to tell him. But he made a deprecatory motion with his hand, and passed me the book with some remark about its contents."

The poet retained his mental vigor and a fair amount of physical strength to the end; his hearing, however, was seriously impaired during the last eight years, owing to a severe fall, and in consequence he was deprived of the solace of music—a loss which he learned to bear philosophically.

The devotion of the Fröhlich sisters shed a peaceful radiance over his declining days. Frau von Littrow-

Bischoff has, in her reminiscences of Grillparzer, given a charming description of a talk with the poet—then seventy-five years of age—while his faithful friends flitted in and out of the room.

"Fräulein Nettie" (Anna, the oldest) "discussed jestingly the contradictions so often found in those who claim to be superior to us, contradictions not only between word and action, but also between word and thought. Her little gibes at certain misanthropic moods and hypochondriacal whims, which she roguishly indulged in as though they were intended merely as general remarks, while in reality they were clearly aimed at the poet himself, gave a delightful impression of the healthy atmosphere of this home, of the perfect candor and truth which, with every mutual forbearance, reigned in this circle of superior beings. It was a genuine pleasure to be present at this merry war of words, in which ready mother wit and apt illustration vied with each other.

"When Fräulein Nettie had disappeared, like the dear little fairy she was, I could not help expressing to Grillparzer how delightful it was to see such natural, unrestrained intercourse as I had just witnessed, in contrast with the stifling atmosphere of incense which so often renders the homes of great poets intolerable.

"He smiled and spoke of the idealism of those three ladies, which they had preserved in all its freshness, and of their artistic nature, untouched by the realities and vulgarities of life. All three had retained, he said, the liveliest interest in art and poetry, and they joined to rare accomplishments in these fields a childlike purity of



THE GRILLPARZER MONUMENT IN THE VIENNA VOLKSGARTEN

character which must appear almost incredible to those who did not know them familiarly.

"Whatever Grillparzer said about the three sisters was told with the greatest simplicity, and not with any intention of praising them. Indeed, now and then there was a slightly critical flavor about his remarks, and therefore what he said was all the greater proof of his friendship and admiration for them, and a weightier testimony to his high value of their virtues than would have been enthusiastic praise, which, by the way, was foreign to his nature.

"Whenever, on subsequent occasions, our conversation turned upon these ladies, his remarks breathed the same sincere recognition of their merits, the same affection and veneration, the same absolute truthfulness, which latter quality characterized everything in and about him. He hated artificiality and detested affectation. Naturalness and truth were his very life, and in this respect the sisters were like him."

Grillparzer died peacefully in his armchair on the 21st of January, 1872, shortly after the completion of his eighty-first year.

He left his modest possessions to Katharina, and she devoted the entire sum, together with her own savings and the royalties from his plays and other writings, to the endowment of a fund established by the poet in 1871. Its income, the "Grillparzer Prize," is awarded triennially to the author of the best German play produced on the Austrian or German stage during the preceding three years. Katharina died on the 3d of March, 1879. She left the furniture and other belongings of the poet to the city of Vienna. They are exhibited to the public in the

"Grillparzer Room" of the town hall. The papers relating to Grillparzer are in the possession of the Imperial Library. They are not to be opened until the year 1929.

Grillparzer's legacy to the world, besides "Libussa," were the dramas "Die Jüdin von Toledo" and "Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg." All three were performed in Vienna, with varying success, not long after the poet's death.

XVIII

LIBUSSA

THE origin of "Libussa" dates back to the year 1809-10, when Grillparzer wrote some scenes of a play entitled "Drahomira," which was to deal with the introduction of Christianity into Bohemia during the tenth century. He returned to the subject at intervals, and finished "Libussa" in 1847. Herder, in his "Stimmen der Völker in Liedern," had told the story of the advent of the dynasty of the Przemysls and the founding of Prague, and Brentano had treated the theme dramatically. Grillparzer was early attracted to the subject, although he felt, as he wrote in his diary, in 1831, that it possessed "a purely intellectual interest, in which sentiment, or at least passion, was almost absolutely wanting." He continued to occupy himself with it at varying intervals.

The fate of the play at its posthumous presentation at the Burgtheater, on the 21st of January, 1874, justified Laube's doubts as to its dramatic possibilities. The public failed to appreciate its legendary and symbolic character, and could not grasp its wealth of thought. As a play for the stage, its diction undoubtedly makes too serious a demand on the attention of the spectator, while its purely dramatic interest is feebler than that of any other of Grillparzer's dramas. "Whenever I read it," says Scherer, "I feel as if enwrapped in dreams and haze. An uncertain

light hovers over everything. Dramatic life has almost wholly disappeared; wise enigmatic sayings hold us captive; we reflect more than we feel; we are lost in thought, but we are not carried away."

Libussa, the youngest daughter of King Krokus of Bohemia, has gone into the woods to gather healing herbs; for her father is dying, and her art may save him. She falls into a stream, but is rescued by the peasant Primislaus, and taken to his hut. Dressed in his sister's clothes, she is led by him to a group of oak trees, where they are to separate forever. He surreptitiously retains a part of her jewelled belt. Libussa returns to her home on his horse.

Her father is dead. Her sisters, Kascha and Tetka, refuse the crown. Theirs is the realm of the supernatural. Kascha replies to the summons of the Bohemian nobles:

Amid stars I roam,
In the depths I reign;
What nature creates
Before me bows.
The lifeless lives,
The life of the living is death.
I shall not reign over corpses,
To others offer your crown.
What have I in common with you?

Tetka's answer to the nobles is:

What shall be is one and only,
What may be is manifold,
But I shall be one and myself.
Truth to glean from falsehood's might,
Establish rights without the right,
Your turn to serve and profit win—

For this seek ye a slave of sin!
My sunny realm a purer light sends down.
Away from me, away! I spurn your crown.

Libussa, however, has since her meeting with Primislaus learned to know human sentiment. The very peasant dress she wears brings her closer to the people. She tells her sisters:

If at this moment of myself I think,
Of how within the stillness of your home
I busied me—I scarce can tell with what—
With ways to reach some means, to some intent,
With moon and stars and herbs, with letters, numbers,
It all seems idle play and purposeless.
This dress of coarser texture grits the skin,
And wakens warmth within my deepest soul.
With human beings would I human be,
And joyful learn to know their destiny.
With quickened pulse their common lot to share,
The crown they offer I will gladly bear.

She admonishes the nobles who acclaim her as queen that she will rule only over a people yielding willing obedience to her mild sceptre, and she reserves to herself the right to return to her sisters if no longer fully trusted. Kascha and Tetka foresee her fate:

She'll rue her vow, and sooner than she thinks.
The vulgar herd insists on higher aids,
But what it touches to itself degrades.
Who would not sink to paltry human ways,
On human countenance must never gaze.

Libussa's idyllic reign is soon disturbed by the quarrels of the common people. The primal questions of right

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press for solution. She is to decide a dispute between two peasants over the boundary of their land :

Of all the words known to the tongue of man
None grates upon me as your constant "right."
Is it your right if harvest yields your soil?
Have you a right to live and to draw breath?
I everywhere see mercy only, blessings
In all that all the world contains for all.
Ye, worthless mites, declaim to me of right?
To help the needy, and to love your brother,
Such is your right, nay, such your duty is.
Right is a dazzling cloak and ornament,
Concealing all the wrong done on this earth.
Your eyes show plainly which of you deceives,
But if I tell the tale, you ask for proof.
Ah, right and proof are only crutches two,
That help the crooked on their limping way.
Compound your quarrel! Else I confiscate
Your land, and plant with thistles it and thorns,
And mark it with a sign: "Here dwells the right."

Libussa finally yields to the importunate demands of the nobles, and agrees to choose a husband. She will be the wife of him who can solve a riddle the key to which is held only by Primislaus, the possessor of the jewel missing from her belt. He is found at his plough, taking his simple meal, and musing upon the uncertain lot of one aspiring to the hand of a queen:

The prince ennobles her who is his wife,
Not so the queen, who but degrades the husband
As man whom as her subject she exalts.

Yet the thought of the maiden who crossed his path in

the night, and vanished as suddenly as she came, continues to haunt him :

Let no one say that hardest is the deed.
The impulse of the moment helps the doer,
The hardest task is to resolve to do.
To tear with sudden move the thousand threads
Which accident and habit spin around us;
To overstep the circle of dark fate,
And masterful map out our path alone—
Against this does our very soul rebel;
For man is meant to cling to what is his,
And on his past his future is to rise.
She thinks of me, and in her heart retains
My image—nay, no image, but a dream,
A nothing merely, like to thousand shapes
It fits as well, without a name or form;
For scarce she saw me in the woods that night
When chance together brought her path and mine.
All this awakes in me confused dreams,
Which yet are bliss to me and prop to life,
And which I cherish, and would not blot out.
Were she a peasant maiden, not Libussa,
And I the ploughman—which, forsooth, I am—
Before her would I step and say: "Thou maiden,
I am the same whom long ago thou met'st;
Look at this gem! And if a light there dawns
In thee, as ever since has filled my breast,
Then take and give!" Then might she speak: "My man,
There 'mid my servants yonder take your place.
What you relate I scarcely can recall."
But, my true self, there sit thee down again,
Take cheese and bread from out thy ploughman's pouch,
And at this table rude enjoy thy meal.
'Tis bread that's thine, and that gives life and strength,
The bread bestowed by favor ill digests.

Libussa sends three nobles to find the man who is to rule over Bohemia. Primislaus's horse is to guide them, and they are led by it to the hut of the peasant. Laden with presents, the fruits of his soil, he appears before Libussa, and offers them to her, proudly humble, together with his sickle.

A paltry gift,
Such as the lowly offers to the higher,
Full conscious of his station—and his worth.
Thus from my home, which is my castle, too,
I come to court, and as I kneel before thee,
I ask thee, princess, what is thy command?

Libussa.

It seems thou speak'st as equal to thy equal.

Primislaus.

My knee before thee bends, my mind as well.

Libussa.

But what if both did not obey your will?
Would still my measure reach thy mind and knee?
Arise!

Primislaus.

I shall, if first thou tak'st my gifts.
If spurned by thee, the giver thou hast spurned.

Libussa.

Let them be taken then! I love these flowers.
What they are meant to mean I do not ask.

(The basket is placed at her feet.)

Your shield you call these? Truth, a simple 'scutcheon!
But what device may thereon be inscribed?
I trow 'twere proud, though modest be these flowers.

Primislaus (who has risen).

Not lacking is my shield in a device,
But humble 'tis, as are the flowers I bring.

Thou lov'st in riddles to express thy thought,
And so dost offer thy most precious gift,
Thyself. And with thy leave I likewise speak.

(He takes up the basket and hands it to her.)

'Mid these flowers lies the riddle,
Its solution 'mid them lies.
Who would capture, bears the fetters,
He who bears them has no chain.

Libussa (looking at the flowers).

Thus speak the flowers in an Eastern tongue,
Which dream-like tells its tale with silent mouth.
And roses and carnations, luscious fruit,
Are but arranged to harbor hidden sense.
An ampler leisure makes their meaning plain.

(She hands the basket to an attendant.)

The mighty only deign to offer riddles,
Which those who serve obediently shall solve,
'Mong equals confidences are in place.
Speak plainly thou: Hast thou before this seen me?

Primislaus.

Who saw thee not, crowned by thy country's choice?

Libussa.

And spake I ever to thee?

Primislaus.

As to all

Who to thy word paid homage as their law.

Libussa.

The steed I sent to thee without a guide
Stood still within the precincts of thy home.
Was thine the steed?

Primislaus.

And had it ever been,

When once I gave it, 'twas no longer mine.
Man haltingly steps forward, never back.

Libussa.

Man, ever man! I see the coming fate,
My sisters, too, have read it in the stars.

Though Wlasta wields her arms with warrior's skill,
 And I have order brought into this land,
 We are but women, paltry women only!
 What if they quarrel, wrangle, wine-inflamed,
 Brush truth aside in hasty silliness,
 Their grasping eye lured by the distant mist,
 Still are they men and lords that rule the world!
 And for a man is clamoring this people,
 The people, but not I; the land, but not its head.
 They call thee shrewd, and shrewdness is adjudged
 Convenient substitute for lacking wisdom.
 A judge they ask for who is to decide,
 Not what is good and fair, and wise and true,
 No, only what is right; how much may take
 Each one, how much refuse, without disgrace,
 Clear of the name of rogue, though rogue in fact.
 For service such as this you seem the man.

The mutual attraction between Libussa and Primislaus surmounts the barriers opposed by mutual pride. Primislaus shrewdly excites her jealousy by pretending to make love to Wlasta, sent by Libussa to sound his real feelings toward her. Not for Wlasta, but for Libussa—who, as Primislaus is well aware, witnesses his interview with the maid—is intended his definition of woman's sphere:

A mighty thing it is, to reign and rule,
 And man throws into it his very being;
 But woman is so lovely in her texture
 That what she adds diminishes her worth.
 And e'en as beauty, decked in richest hue,
 Adorned in purple and in foreign silks,
 By each accoutrement you take away,
 Becomes more beauteous and its real self,
 Till, full revealed, her pristine whiteness shines,

And in the trembling knowledge of her wealth
Her last and crowning victory is won—
So woman, beauty's charm-endowed child,
Half made to rule, half clinging for support,
Her fullest flowering attains as wife,
Triumphant weakness her supremest strength;
What ne'er she asked does freely she receive,
And what she gives is held divinest gift—
As Heaven holds us only while it blesses.

Primislaus is imprisoned by Libussa's order. When confronted by her, he voluntarily surrenders the jewel he has held so long, and, renouncing all claims to her gratitude, asks leave to withdraw to his plough. She, however, tells him that the people, believing his life to be in danger, are clamoring to see him, and to hail him as their leader. As such, and as her lawful husband, to whom she bends her knee, she presents him to the people.

The crowning event of their joint reign, the founding of Prague, is undertaken only after serious misgivings on Libussa's part as to the wisdom of collecting a multitude within town walls that

Separate mankind from nature's breath,
Make them incapable of growth and life,
And from the master spirit alienate.

Primislaus's practical sense convinces her that the future welfare of the nation demands the expansion of villages into towns, and he silences her doubting:

Do you believe them wiser than yourself?

with the remark:

I know not. May be not. And yet, Libussa,
While we survey the whole with clearer view,

They singly know what singly better is,
And their advice I value at its worth.

Primislaus asks Libussa to consecrate, as priestess, the altar erected on the spot where the new city is to arise, but she feels the waning of her prophetic power, as she becomes conscious of the decline of her physical strength. On resuming her old garb, however, her inspired prevision returns, and with a blessing for the people and their future capital on her lips, her spirit returns to its celestial abode. Her being and hence her happiness were not of this earth.

An outline of the drama conveys but a faint suggestion of its range and depth of thought. Written during the years 1830 to 1847, when political and philosophic speculation occupied much of Grillparzer's thought, and intended only for his own eye, "Libussa" contains some of his most significant utterances on social problems and the march of human development. Without committing himself to any definite historical or political ideal, he shows us the conflict of the permanent forces at work in human society. The well-meaning dreamer is opposed by the practical doer, the feminine mind and heart by masculine sense and strength. Libussa's idyllic reign exemplifies the visionary ideas of Rousseau; the advent of Primislaus marks the return to sober reality. But over and above the varying phases of human endeavor, beyond the clash of class and race antagonism, is heard the voice of the eternal right and of abstract justice.

XIX

DIE JÜDIN VON TOLEDO.

GRILLPARZER'S "Die Jüdin von Toledo," an adaptation of Lope de Vega's "Las Paces de los Reyes y Judía de Toledo"—a play whose plot has been variously utilized in drama and fiction—depicts with vivid realism the spell exercised by a beautiful wayward Jewess over Alfonso VIII. of Castile. The masterly exposition of the drama reveals the singular traits of Rahel, her designing coquetry, destined to merge into consuming passion, her love of finery and frolic, and her sudden transition from reckless daring to abject fear. The play abounds in sharply contrasting characters. Beside the fascinating Jewess we have her sordid father Isaac, her wise sister Esther, the noble-minded but weak King Alfonso, and his coldly virtuous English queen Eleanor. The first scene is in the royal garden at Toledo.

(Enter Isaac, Rahel, and Esther.)

Isaac.

Stay, and enter not the garden!
Know'st thou not it is forbidden?
When the king here takes his airing
Not a Jew may—God will punish!—
Not a Jew may walk around here.

Rahel (sings).

La, la, la, la.

Isaac.

Dost thou hear me?

Rahel.

Yes, I listen.

Isaac.

And thou leav'st not?

Rahel.

When I'm ready!

Isaac.

Oh, oh, oh! The Lord doth try me!

Yet the poor I've paid my tribute,

I have prayed and I have fasted,

Tasted not of what's forbidden.

Oh, and yet the Lord doth try me!

Rahel (to Esther).

Wherefore tugg'st thou at my elbow?

Yet I linger and shall leave not.

Still the king I will behold once,

And the court and all its splendor,

All their gold and all their jewels.

He is young and fair, they tell me,

Good to look at, I will see him.

Isaac.

And if caught thou by his minions?

Rahel.

O, my soft speech shall release me.

Isaac.

As thy mother did before thee?

She, too, looked for handsome Christians,

Hankered after Egypt's flesh-pots.

Had I guarded her not closely,

I believe—may God forgive me!—

That thy folly were bequeathed thee,

Were bestowed by scornful Christians.

But my first wife, I could trust her!

(Addressing Esther.)

She, thy mother, good as thou art,

Though but poor. But what availed me

All the riches of the second?

Was she lavish not in spending,
Keeping open house and table?
Did she buy not gems and jewels?
Look! She truly is her daughter!
Is she not bedecked with jewels,
Not adorned with handsome dresses,
Heathenish the whole to look at!

Rahel (sings).

Am I not fair,
Am I not rich?
They are chagrined,
But what care I? La, la, la, la.

Isaac.

There she struts in costly shoes,
Wears them out, nor thinks about it,
Every step a groat and more.
In her ear a sparkling jewel;
If a thief comes, he will snatch it,
If she drops it, who will find it!

Rahel (taking off one of the earrings).

See, I loosen it and hold it,
How it flashes, how it glitters!
Yet I value it so little;
If I choose, to you I give it.

(To Esther.)

Or I throw it from me. Look!

(She makes a motion with her hand as if throwing the ring away.)

Isaac (running in the direction it would take).

Woe is me! Where did it fly to?
Woe is me! How can I find it?

(He searches in the bushes.)

Esther.

O how could you? Why, the jewel—

Rahel.

Do you think me then so foolish
As to throw away a jewel?

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Look, I hold it in my hand here,
In my ear once more I hang it.
Little gem, my cheek thou suitest.

Isaac (still searching).

Woe is me! 'Tis lost!

Rahel.

Here, father,
Come! Recovered is the jewel,
I was jesting.

Isaac.

May the Lord thee—!

What a jest this! Come and leave now!

Rahel.

Ask whate'er you please, but this not.
I must see the king, will see him,
And he me; yes, he shall see me.
When he comes, and when he wonders:
"Who is she, the handsome Jewess?
What's thy name?" "My name is Rahel,
Isaac's Rahel, lord, I am."
And the king my cheeks shall pinch then,
Handsome Rahel they will call me,
Spite of all their raging envy.
Little care I for their anger!

Esther.

Father!

Isaac.

Child!

Esther.

A crowd approaches.

Isaac.

Lord of hosts! What will befall me?
'Tis Rehoboam and his cohorts.
Leave this moment!

Rahel.

Listen, father!

Isaac.

Stay then! Esther, hurry with me!
Let the fool remain alone here,
Let the unclean come and seize her,
Kill her! She herself has willed it.
Esther, come!

Rahel.

O father, stay!

Isaac.

Have your will then! Esther, come!

(He leaves.)

Rahel.

I will not alone remain here.
Listen! Stay! They go! O woe's me!
Not alone I stay here! Listen!
O they're coming! Sister! Father!

(She hurries after them.)

The king and queen appear on the scene with their retinue. Alfonso has prepared a surprise for Eleanor, but she is cold and unappreciative.

King.

It is too bad, Manrique!
Our honest efforts have had no result.
For days and weeks we digged and delved, and hoped
To change this garden—which now merely bears
Our orange trees and grants a grateful shade—
Into a park to suit the English taste,
Such as Britannia cultivates and loves,
The exacting home of my exacting mistress.
But lo! she smiles, and silent shakes her head.
Thus are they all, Britannia's children, all;
Their customs, every inch, they full demand.
If you give less, they smile with proud disdain.
It was at least well meant, Eleanor;

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And therefore grant a word of thanks to those
Who toiled for us, God knows how long a time.

Queen.

I thank you, gentlemen!

The king is informed by Don Garceran, son of Manrique, the admiral of Castile, that the people are everywhere praying for victory over the Moors:

The bells resound throughout our country's limits,
And in the temple gather worshippers,
But their mistaken zeal, as often happens,
Has turned against those of a strange belief,
Who ply their trade and traffic through the land;
And here and there a Jew has been maltreated.

King.

And you have suffered it? No, by the Lord!
Who'er confides in me shall be protected,
Their faith is theirs, their deeds alone concern me.

Garceran.

They are considered spies in Moorish pay.

King.

No one betrays what unknown is to him,
Their mammon have I e'er held in contempt,
And scorned to seek advice at Jewish hands.
Nor Jew, nor Christian knows my secret plans,
And therefore, as you value your own life—

A Female Voice (outside).

O, woe is me!

King.

What means this?

Garceran.

There, my lord,

An old man flees, a Jew, pursued by soldiers.
Two girls beside him. One, behold! flees hither.

King.

And well she may, for here protection is.
Woe be to him who touches but her hair!

(Calling loudly.)

Here! Hurry here!

(Rahel, fleeing, appears.)

Rahel.

O Lord, they're killing me,
And kill my father! Is there nowhere help?
(She perceives the queen and kneels before her.)

O noble lady, grant me gracious aid,
Extend thy hand protecting o'er thy maid,
Who as a slave will serve thee, not as Jewess!

(She attempts to seize the hands of the queen, who turns from her.)

Rahel (rising).

Here, too, not safety; anguish everywhere,
And death! O whither turn I? Lo! a man,
Whose eyes cast moon-like rays that cheer and cool,
Whose air and bearing speak of majesty.
Thou canst protect me, lord, oh, and thou shalt!
I will not die, I will not, no, no, no!

(She throws herself down before the king, and clutches his right foot, her head bowed to the ground.)

King (to the attendants who approach her).

Leave her! Almost bereft of sense from fright,
Convulsive shakes her frame and moves my own.

Rahel (standing up).

And all that I call mine,

(Taking off her bracelet.)

this ornament,

My golden necklace and this precious cloth,

(Divesting herself of a kerchief wound shawl-like round her neck.)

My father paid for it full forty pounds—

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'Tis real India weave—this cloth is yours,
But spare my life, O do not let me die!

(She sinks down into her former posture. Isaac and Esther are brought in.)

King.

What has he done?

Manrique.

My lord, as well you know,
His people are forbidden by the law
To enter royal grounds when you are near.

King.

If it forbidden be, I say it is allowed.

Esther.

No spy, my lord, is he, a tradesman merely,
The letters found on him are all in Hebrew,
And not in Arabic, the Moorish tongue.

King.

She speaks the truth, I know.

(Pointing to Rahel.)

And this one here?

Esther.

She is my sister.

King.

Take her then and go!

Rahel (to Esther, who approaches her).

No, no! They'll seize me, they will take me hence,
And kill me!

(Pointing to the ornaments she has discarded.)

Here the ransom lies I offer.

Here let me rest and snatch a moment's sleep,

(Pressing her cheek against the king's knee.)

Here safety is, and sweet it is to rest.

Queen.

Will you not hence?

King.

You see, I am a prisoner.

Queen.

If prisoner you, then I am free to go.

(She leaves with her attendants.)

King.

One more rebuff! Their primness but creates

What they so ardently desire to banish.

(To Rahel, in a severe tone.)

Again I tell thee: Rise!— Give her her kerchief,

And let her go.

Rahel.

My lord, grant me brief respite—

My limbs are palsied and refuse to stir.

(She rests her elbow on her knee and supports her head with her hand.)

King (stepping back).

Is always she so timid?

Esther.

No, my lord!

A while ago she was in reckless mood,

And pouted, bent on seeing you, my lord!

King.

On seeing me? She dearly paid the wish.

Esther.

And when at home, she gayly romps and frolics,

And plays with us, with man and beast she plays,

And laugh we must, though serious be our mood.

King.

Would then, indeed, she were a Christian,

And at the court here, where 'tis dull enough!

A little jesting now and then would suit us.

Here, Garceran!

Garceran.

My gracious king!

Esther (occupied with Rahel).

Arise!

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Rahel (rises and seizes Esther's necklace and lays it down beside the bracelet and kerchief).

Add thou thy own possessions to my ransom.

Esther.

So be it then.

King.

What think you of it all?

Garceran.

I, O my lord?

King.

Do not dissimulate,

You know the sex. Myself have rarely turned
An eager eye on them. But she seems fair.

Garceran.

She is, my lord!

King.

Then, Garceran, be warned,

For you shall lead her hence, and into safety.

Rahel.

Replace my bracelet! O, how thou dost hurt!
My necklace, too—but that is 'round my neck—
The kerchief keep. My head is dazed and heavy.

King.

Take home the girl!

Garceran.

My lord, I fear.

King.

Fear what?

Garceran.

Excited is the mob—

King.

Methinks you're right.

Although one word from me would shield the girl,
'Twere better to avoid all provocation.

Esther (smoothing Rahel's attire around her neck).

And how awry thy dress is and displaced!

King.

Let her at first be taken to a kiosk,
The garden all around abounds in them,
When evening comes—

Garceran.

At your command, my lord!

King.

What would you know? Ah, well, indeed, I see!
Are you not ready yet?

Esther.

We are, my lord!

King.

When evening comes, and scattered is the crowd,
Then take her to her home, and 'twill be well.

Garceran.

Come, then, thou heathen fair!

King.

Why heathen, man!

Esther (to Rahel, who is preparing to leave).

And thank'st thou not for all the mercy shown?

Rahel.

My lord, I thank thee for thy mighty help.

(Pointing to her neck.)

Could but this neck, surrendered to the axe,
This breast a shield against thy enemies—
But that thou ask'st not—

King.

Faith! A handsome shield!

Go now, and God be with thee! Garceran,

(In a lower voice.)

I do not wish that she whom I protect,
By bold advances or malicious sport
Be rudely troubled.

Rahel (putting her hand to her forehead).

O, I cannot walk!

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King (seeing that Garceran offers her his arm).

Wherefore your arm? Her sister guide her steps!

And thou, old man, protect thy daughter well.

The world is bad, thy treasure needs a guardian.

(Exeunt Rahel, her father and sister, with Garceran.)

King (following them with his eyes).

She totters still, a heaving sea of fright

Her very body, in recurring waves.

She tightly clasped my foot; it almost pains.

Queer contrast! Cowards justly are despised,

While woman's strength in weakness strongest is.

What think you, admiral, of what has passed?

Manrique.

My lord, the punishment you have imposed

Upon my son so gently is severe.

King.

The punishment?

Manrique.

In making him the guardian

Of such as they.

King.

He'll bear with it, my friend.

The king, disguised in his cloak, appears at the kiosk before Garceran's departure with Rahel, and rallies him on his behavior toward women:

Do not pretend to scorn a luscious morsel!

I wager if the maid in yon apartment

Bestowed on you one glance, you'd be aflame.

I do not love her race, but this I know,

That what disfigures them is of our doing.

Struck lame by us, we blame them if they limp.

And, Garceran, this tribe of restless shepherds,

That flees from place to place, has something great.

We all are of to-day, but they reach back
Far to creation's early dawn, when walked
Manlike with man our God in Paradise,
When angel guests appeared to patriarchs,
And justice reigned, as given by the Lord.
Amid a world of fancy, truth is found
In Cain and Abel, in Rebecca's wisdom,
In Jacob, who wooed Rachel while he served—
What is the maiden's name?

Garceran.

I know not, sir.

King.

No! And in Ahasuerus, he whose sceptre
Touched Esther, who became his wife, a Jewess,
Protecting angel to those of her tribe.
Thus Christian and Mohammedan trace back
Their ancestry to this race as the first.
They doubtful look on us, not we on them,
And if, like Esau, they have lost their rights,
We daily ten times crucify our Lord
Through evil ways and downright wickedness,
While they but once were guilty of the crime.

Rahel's gayety soon returns amid her new surroundings.
Laughing, dancing, and singing, she dons the fantastic
raiments, relics of a recent masquerade, which she has
found in one of the cabinets of the kiosk. She takes the
king's portrait from its frame and presses it to her bosom.
She tells her sister:

I like the picture. Look, 'tis beautiful.
I'll hang it in my room, next to my bed,
And morn and evening I shall look at it,
And think—whate'er the thoughts that come and go
When we throw off the burden of our clothes,

And feel ourselves delivered from their pressure.
 But they must not believe I stole the picture.
 —Am I not rich, and wherefore should I steal?—
 You carry 'round your neck my likeness, Esther,
 That we shall hang in place of this one here.
 He'll gaze at it, as now I look on his,
 And think of me, should his remembrance fail.
 Hand me yon stool, and look! I am the queen,
 And this king here I fasten to the stool.
 They say that witches, who can love compel,
 Drive needles, thus, into a waxen image;
 Each thrust that penetrates into the heart
 Arrests or wakes the life that throbs with love.

(She fastens the four corners of the picture with needles to the back of the stool.)

O might each needle thrust draw living blood!
 I fain would drink it with these thirsty lips,
 Rejoicing in the evil I created.
 But there it hangs, as silent as 'tis fair.
 Yet will I speak to him as does a queen,
 Dressed in the cloak and crown which so befit me.

(She sits down on the stool in front of the picture.)

The king enters the kiosk in spite of Garceran's protest. Rahel starts at his approach and remains speechless, her gaze fixed on his portrait.

King.

Am I so dreadful then an apparition?

(He approaches her. Rahel shakes her head violently.)

Take courage then, and fear not, my dear child.
 Yes, once more do I say that thou didst please me.
 When from this holy war I shall return,
 To which my honor prompts me and my duty,
 Perhaps about thee I may make inquiry.
 Where is thy home?

Isaac (rapidly).

My lord, 'tis in the Ghetto,

Ben Mathaes' house.

Esther.

Unless they drive us hence

Before that time.

King.

My word, they shall not do it!

I shall protect whom I protection grant.

And if then thou art still so talkative,

And full of frolic, as thou wert with thine,

Not shy as now, I'll while away an hour,

And from the court's oppression free, draw breath.

But now be gone, for it is highest time.

Go with her, Garceran, but ere you go

Restore that portrait to its former place.

Rahel.

Mine is the portrait.

King.

Thine? What dost thou say?

Restore it to the frame whence it was taken!

Rahel (to Garceran).

Touch not the needles, nor this portrait touch!

Else I'll transfix it with a deeper thrust,

(Aiming a needle at the picture.)

See here! Straight through the heart!

King.

Good Heaven! Stop!

Thou almost frighten'st me. What art thou, girl?

Dost practise secret arts? And maybe crimes?

I seemed to feel within my very breast

The thrust aimed at the picture.

Esther.

Gracious lord,

Though but a petted and a wayward child,

Her mind knows naught of arts that are forbidden.

Seized by a sudden whim, she did the deed.

King.

But reckless is the game that thus she played.
It drove the blood up to my very eyes,
And I see things in an uncertain light.

(*To Garceran.*)

Is she not beautiful?

Garceran.

She is indeed, my lord.

The queen and courtiers approach the kiosk, and Alfonso seeks refuge in one of the rooms. Garceran prevents his father, Manrique, from going in search of the king; the queen retires, wounded to the quick. Alfonso reappears, conscious of his humiliation, and determined to cleanse himself from guilt in the blood of the Moors. Before leaving, he enters the room which Rahel had occupied, to see whether his portrait has been restored to its place. He finds it gone and her own in its stead. He takes the picture down and hides it in his bosom. As he leaves the scene, he asks an attendant,

Is yonder castle not

Retiro, where my ancestor, Don Sancho,

Found refuge from the world, with his fair Mooress?

Attendant.

It is, my gracious lord.

King.

Our ancestors

We'll imitate in valor and true worth,

And not wherein they weakly fell from grace.

The highest task is conquering one's self,

Then let the foreign conqueror be met.

The charms of Rahel hold Alfonso captive at Retiro. Though conscious of his guilt, he lulls himself into the

belief that he can at any time burst his fetters. The news that the queen has left Toledo, and that she and the nobles consider him as one dead and the country virtually without a ruler, rouses him from his life of self-indulgence. He returns to the queen and asks her to forgive and forget his transgressions.

It were not well, in striking out anew,
To close the path by cumbering barriers,
Useless reminders of our former self.
I here absolve myself from past transgression.
Your purity no absolution needs.

Queen.

O speak not thus, my husband! If you knew
What thoughts, ill-boding, born of dark despair,
Have found their way into my anguish'd heart!

King.

Perhaps e'en vengeance? Ah, so much the better;
For then you feel forgiveness is your duty,
And that no man is safe, not e'en the best.
Not ours be vengeance, ours not punishment,
For she, believe me, stands absolved from guilt,
As guiltless is all vain and vulgar weakness,
That knows resistance not, and tamely yields.
Alone I bear, myself alone, all guilt.

Queen.

O let me grasp the comfort you hold out!
The Moorish tribe and all such kindred folk
Are versed in secret and in hellish arts;
With image, sign and word, and noxious draught,
They turn the heart of man within his breast,
And make his will submissive to their own.

King.

Surrounded are we all by magic art,
But we ourselves hold the magician's wand.
A single thought brings near what lies remote;

What now we spurn may later tempt the eye,
 And in this world of wonders numberless
 We are ourselves the greatest of all wonders.

Alfonso learns too late that the queen and the nobles have during his absence determined upon Rahel's death. He hastens to the castle of Retiro to avert the deed, but arrives after it has been consummated. A strange scene, dramatically as well as ethically startling, terminates the play. The king, in order to gather strength to avenge the murder of Rahel, decides to gaze upon her body, but after viewing it he retires disillusioned. Rahel in death reveals to him her unworthiness of his affection while living.

An evil look around cheek, chin, and mouth,
 A leering something in the fiery eye,
 Her beauty poisoned and her charm dispelled.
 When first I entered, to spur on my wrath,
 Half dreading to add fuel to the flame,
 It happened otherwise than I had thought.
 Instead of pictures of a sensuous past,
 My wife, and child, and people, stepped before me.
 Distorted every feature stared at me,
 Her arms appeared to move, and reach for me.
 Her portrait then I cast into her tomb.
 And here I am, and shudder, as you see.

XX

EIN BRUDERZWIST IN HABSBURG

"EIN BRUDERZWIST IN HABSBURG" (A Brothers' Feud in the House of Hapsburg) unrolls before the eyes of the spectator the dramatic beginnings of the Thirty Years' War. Historically accurate, the play is in an autobiographic sense the most significant work of its author. He began it in 1825, with a view to its performance in the Burgtheater; but the work had not yet proceeded far toward completion when the ill-success of "Weh dem, der lügt," in 1838, determined Grillparzer to write no longer for the Vienna stage. Freed from the restraints with which he had hitherto been compelled to reckon, he threw himself into his labor with all the ardor of the poet whose creations are meant to reveal the inmost thoughts of his soul. This national play contains, in Ehrhard's words, "the philosopher's and citizen's last testament." "It would seem as if he had chosen to show to himself all that he was capable of doing, and that he revenged himself for the disdain of the multitude by depriving it of new beauties."

In depicting his hero, Rudolph II., Grillparzer followed substantially Ranke's famous description. The misanthropical, irresolute emperor has withdrawn from Vienna into the castle at Prague, where he abandons himself to his astrological and artistic fancies. The city is torn by religious dissensions, and the emperor is powerless

to deal with the rebels. His army, commanded by Count Mansfeld, is fighting the Turks in Hungary. He has abundant reason to distrust his nearest of kin, his brother, Archduke Matthias, irresolute like himself, yet devoured by vain ambition. Egged on by the able and unscrupulous priest, Melchior Klesel, Matthias first dreams of an empire for himself, and when foiled in his plans is persuaded by Klesel to ask the emperor for the chief command in Hungary. At this stage the play opens. Matthias finds that it is not an easy matter to obtain admittance to the presence of his brother, who is guarded by the all-powerful chamberlain, Wolf Rumpf. What Rumpf insolently denies to the emperor's brother, he obsequiously grants to Rudolph's favorite, his illegitimate son, Don Cæsar, a licentious youth, without filial respect or fixed principles, but not devoid of generous impulses. Don Cæsar comes to the emperor to plead for the life of his friend, Field-marshal Russworm, who has been sentenced to death for killing some one in a duel. In a few vivid strokes these characters are placed before us.

(Wolf Rumpf appears, carrying papers under his arm, behind him another chamberlain. The latter points to Archduke Matthias. Rumpf, ignoring the sign, proceeds toward the door. When about to enter, Klesel bars his path.)

Klesel.

Your worship's pardon! May his archduke's Highness
Hope for an audience with the emperor?

Rumpf.

Impossible!

Klesel (pointing to Matthias).

His Highness waits.

Rumpf.

His servant!

Impossible! His Majesty's unwell.

Acta, Negotia.

Klesel.

Only a minute.

(Whispers to Matthias.)

Urge him, urge him!

Matthias.

Herr Rumpf, give me your hand!

Rumpf.

Too great an honor! But it cannot be.

The sleep disturbed—distinctly indisposed

From mal di testa. I should risk my place

If I permitted it.

Klesel.

You jest, Herr Rumpf.

Too well is known your power at this court.

Rumpf.

So seems it, but his Majesty is strict;

The nearer him, the nearer to his ire.

But yestereve tremendous was his wrath.

"No Philipp Third are we," his lordship cried,

"To be dictated to by Privados."

I was compelled in haste to seek the door.

It cannot be. Impossible! No, no!

(He turns away from them. Don Cæsar rushes in.)

Don Cæsar.

Where is the emperor?

Thou numskull, speak!

Can I see him?

Rumpf.

A most devout good-morning,

Señor Don Cæsar! May the Lord preserve you!

Don Cæsar.

How is the emperor?

Rumpf.

Well, wondrous well!

His Majesty grows younger with each day,
Looks barely thirty. Said I but to-day:
A pity 'tis you show yourself so rarely,
The women most deplore this deprivation.
His Majesty then laughed.

Don Cæsar.

I do not wonder,

Had I been present, I should, too, have laughed.
He barely thirty! With such frame and legs!
But can I see him? Speak!

Rumpf.

Assuredly.

A moment's patience graciously vouchsafe.
His Majesty is—

(He whispers into his ear, pointing to Matthias.)

Don Cæsar.

Ah! So be it then.

Don Cæsar leaves, to try a horse which the emperor had bought for him in the morning. Matthias insists on seeing Rudolph, and is told by Rumpf to step aside and take his chance when the emperor passes on his way to mass. Archduke Ferdinand, Rudolph's nephew, is announced. His rigid Catholicism, which abhors compromise with the rebellious Protestants, is brought into vivid contrast with the emperor's humane stirrings, which, however, are again and again overmastered by his autocratic pride. Rudolph appears on the scene. Two men, holding up some paintings, kneel in his path. He stops before one, looks at it, and points with his cane at a defect in the drawing. He shakes his head, and the picture is removed. The second one seems to please him. He signifies to

Rumpf that he wishes to retain it, and lifts up three fingers of his right hand.

Rumpf.

Two thousand!

Rudolph (vehemently).

Three.

(He goes to the table, on which lie several books, and picks up one of them.)

Rumpf.

From Spain.

Rudolph (in gayer mood).

Lope de Vega!

Rumpf.

Despatches from your Majesty's envoy

At Madrid.

(Rudolph contemptuously thrusts aside the letters on the table and settles down to read the book.)

Archduke Ferdinand has come.

(Rudolph looks up for a moment, listening, and then resumes his reading.)

Don Cæsar has been here.

(Rudolph again looks up.)

And will be back.

Klesel (to Matthias).

Take courage! Why, you tremble! God forbid!

(The emperor bursts into a laugh over a passage in the book.)

The moment is propitious, for his Majesty

Seems in good spirits. Make then the attempt!

Rudolph (while reading).

Divino autor, fenix de España!

Matthias (approaching the emperor).

My gracious sovereign and emperor,

Leaving my banishment at Linz, I've dared—

Rudolph (looking up).

Sortija del olvido—ah, ah, ah!

"Ring of forgetfulness."—Would I might own it!

Matthias.

To crave your pardon,

(He kneels.)

ready, O my lord,

My rights, all those that justly are my own,

Though coveted by others, to surrender,

The right inherited to Austria's lands,

The future hope to mount upon the throne.

Mine but some quiet place to die in!

(He puts his hand upon the arm of the emperor's chair.)

Rudolph.

Who stirs here? Rumpf! I want to be alone!

Alone!

Matthias.

My gracious emperor and lord!

Rudolph (lifting his cane threateningly toward Rumpf).

Alone!

Rumpf.

I said so, but his Highness urged.

Rudolph (with increasing vehemence).

Alone!

Rumpf (to Matthias).

Go hence, my gracious lord!

Klesel.

Come, come!

Or all is lost.

Matthias.

O God!

Rudolph (to himself).

Alone, alone!

Matthias.

O take me to my tomb, there to find rest!

Rudolph (in a hollow voice).

Alone!

Rumpf.

What can be done, my God!

(He picks up the book which the emperor had thrown down, and hands it to him.)

The book!

(Rudolph refuses it.)

Reports from Hungary have come to us.

Raab is relieved, and Pápa is besieged.

The malcontents apparently intend—

(In a livelier tone.)

A merchant has announced himself from Florence,

He deals in polished gems of priceless value.

Rudolph.

Show!

Rumpf.

But the prices seem exorbitant.

Rudolph.

Absurd!

Rumpf.

Shall I then?—As you will.

The Spanish Orator Baltasar Zuñiga

Desires an audience.

(The emperor shakes his head.)

Do you then command

That the reports be presently—

(The emperor brings his cane down on the floor in disgust.)

Good God!

(Enter Don Cæsar.)

Rumpf.

You come at the right moment. Try and see—

Don Cæsar.

I kiss your Majesty's most gracious hand.

(The emperor looks at him angrily.)

You seem ill-humored; speak, howe'er, I must.
 A life is in the balance—more than life.
 Courtmartialled and condemned is Hermann Russworm,
 Your Majesty's most true and faithful servant,
 To die ignobly for a homicide—
 A deed done in the direst self-defence.
 I beg of you this sentence to annul,
 Which nonsense is and madness, blasphemy,
 And to preserve a life so dear to you,
 A friend to me I cannot do without,
 Whom I must save whatever be the cost.

(Rudolph looks at Rumpf questioningly.)

Rumpf.

The matter is concerning Hermann Russworm,
 Who, half in anger, half by accident
 Struck dead the colonel.

(The emperor rummages among the papers on the table.)

Perhaps the sentence?

It waits your signature in yonder room.
 Shall I perhaps?— I hasten to submit it.

(Exit.)

Don Cæsar.

I thank your Majesty then in advance
 For granting pardon to so good a man,
 Who is whatever signifies that word.
 His enemy was slave to priests and women,
 A scoundrel and a hypocrite. If Russworm
 Too far forgot himself while fired with wrath,
 Remember that the self-same vehemence
 Won you in Hungary a dozen battles.

(Rumpf returns with a sealed package.)

Rumpf.

The sentence.

(He hands the document to the emperor, who refuses it.)

O good God! Your Majesty
 Perhaps will deign most graciously to say
 What is your pleasure in so grave a matter.

(The emperor takes the document, reads the address, and hands it back with derisive laughter.)

I know it is in outward form addressed
To judge and counsel of your town of Prague,
But if the sentence really be signed,
As I should presuppose—

(The emperor beats the floor with his cane angrily.)

Don Cæsar.

My gracious lord!

I must request that for a single moment
You bid defiance to the gloomy mood
Which in your silence fondly you indulge.
Consider: If this sentence, duly signed,
And by your hand attested, reaches Prague,
My friend must die.

Rudolph.

He dies, and thou with him,

Darest thou to speak for him another word.
Degenerate! I know thy ways full well,
Thy nightly riots with thy boon companions,
A menace to my peaceful subjects' daughters;
In league with rebels, thou, and Lutherans.

Don Cæsar.

I never honored rebels with my friendship,
And as to faith, that, sir, is to be judged
By God alone.

Rudolph.

By God and thee, thou mean'st.

Believe in what thy teachers did believe,
The wiser and the better let decide,
Then later do thy thinking.—Russworm dies!
And thank thy God and my own leniency
That equally my sword strikes not the rest
Who helped thee on, who knew of thy intent,
And with approval spoke of the foul deed,
The dastard murder of Belgiojoso.

Relinquish her, the maiden that thou seekest
In impure lust!

Don Caesar.

No, sir; for she deceived me.

Rudolph.

Think'st thou? Since first the stars revolved,
Has woman been deceived by man.

Don Caesar.

Such was the case
At least with one quite near to me in blood.

Rudolph.

Near thee? Thou know'st then where thou camest from?
And know'st him, too, to whom thou ow'st thy life?
Say yes! Say yes, and an eternal prison,
Where penetrates no ray of heavenly light—
Thus is it written in the stars above:
The nearer me, the bitterer the foe.
And there he stands, and laughs in scornful spite,
As Satan laughed before the son of man.
Away this laugh, away! And take his arms!
Seize him, a prisoner!— You hesitate?
I shall myself then, with this hand of mine—

(To one of the bodyguard.)

Lend me thy partisan, old friend, that I—

(While dropping his cane, in order to take hold of the partisan, he totters and is about to fall. Bystanders hurry to the spot, and support him.)

Dare you lay hands on me? You rebels, you!
Yo soy el emperador! I the emperor!
Am I betrayed within my castle walls?
Is there no help, is no protector nigh?

(Archduke Ferdinand appears on the scene.)

Ferdinand.

Blessed be this house! How now, your Majesty?
What is the cause of this alarm? Who speaks?

Don Cæsar (to Rumpf, who is endeavoring to calm him).

I little care, though thousand devils spite me!

Ferdinand (to Don Cæsar, with his hand lightly resting on his sword).

Go, young man, go! Else you may learn too late

Near is the evil one if called by us.

Avaunt, you all, avaunt!

(Those present retire toward the background, Don Cæsar among them, who is accompanied by Rumpf.)

My gracious lord!

Rudolph.

Who are you? Who? How dare you?

Ferdinand.

I am your nephew, and your servant, sir,

Fernand of Graz, obedient to your call.

Rudolph (shrinking from his touch).

Es bien, es bien! 'Tis well. I bid you welcome.

Ferdinand.

Will you not seated be, my lord? Your wrath

Consumes your strength and hurts your noble self.

(He leads the emperor to his arm-chair.)

Rudolph (seated).

Thus, see you, is it ordered in my castle.

Thus penetrates the modern, wild-eyed age,

Past hundred guards, into my presence here,

And fronts me with its frightful countenance.

This age, this age! For frenzied though he be,

That youth is but disciple of his age,

Practising only what his master taught.

Look 'round you in whatever land you may,

Where is respect for ancient law and custom,

For lofty science and for art sublime?

Have not the people left their God and temple,

And built a calf upon the mount of Dan,

Which kneeling they adore, their own hands' work?

They call it "purifying faith." God knows
 Faith purifies itself if clean the heart.
 No, selfishness it is and self-conceit,
 Which values nothing made by other hands.
 Therefore I blame yon boy and punish him,
 Whom, if he pause not, fate shall overtake,
 Though well I know the source of all his vice.
 I sometimes feel within me a grim joy
 In wrangling with him, seeking in his breast
 For all the germs of his perversities,
 Implanted by a wild and evil world.
 I cannot tame his age, but him I can,
Him shall I tame, with the Almighty's aid.

Ferdinand.

You shall, my lord, and you would tame the age
 Were firm your will for this as 'tis for that.

Rudolph.

My uncle, Charles the Fifth, could not do this,
 And Saint Just saw him a repentant monk.
 Weak am I, and a man of modest parts,
 Wherein he failed, I never can succeed.

Ferdinand.

O, why distrust your noble, gifted self?
 Firm be your purpose, and the Lord's support,
 Like prayer answered, will descend on you.
 The age needs a physician, you can cure it.

Rudolph.

A fine physician who needs cure himself!
 I, all alone!

Ferdinand.

Alone, my lord, you say?

Forgive the pupil who reproves his teacher.
 Around you throngs one-half of all the world
 That still has faith in God and in his image,
 The sovereign on his father's rightful throne.
 For you is Spain, the Pope, and Italy,
 Your crownland's undiminished strength is yours,

As yet untouched by false religious teaching.
Count but your numbers; tenfold, hundredfold,
Outweigh they your opponents, weak in number,
Who seem but strong by restless show of strength.

Rudolph.

The arms are many, but where is the head?

Ferdinand.

In you, whom equals none in heart and mind,
And with you Austria's noble princes are,
Whom God himself created as your helpers.

Rudolph.

You mean yourself?

Ferdinand.

Mine be no future bliss
If ever I had other thought and aim
Than Austria's welfare and our Saviour's glory!
Nor is it I, but those of nearer kin,
Your brothers, noble Max and Albrecht wise,
And he the third—the first, whom even now
In yonder antechamber sorrowful—

Rudolph (turning away).

Es bien!

Ferdinand.

You see, the old distrust once more
Descends, a heavy mist, upon your brow.
O woe is us, if true what people say,
That one of those who darkly scan the stars,
Who gather at your court from near and far—
Astrologers, who deal in dire prediction—
Has from your noble house estranged your mind,
Through threat of danger from your nearest kin!
If so, woe's us, woe if for a mere semblance
You give up truth, your people's happiness.

Rudolph (starting up in anger).

For semblance? Semblance? Knowest thou the art—
If art it be—which thou hast thus reviled?

Think'st thou there is a single grain of sand
 Which is not linked to the eternal chain
 Of active forces, causes and results?
 Are Heaven's stars above mere paltry candles,
 That show at night the way to drunken beggars?
 My faith in God rests, and not in the stars,
 But yet those stars come from the hand of God,
 The first of all His works, repositories
 Of His design ere was the world created,
 When He alone and they reigned over chaos.
 And had the Lord not later added man,
 The creature of His will, there were no witness
 Of what He wrought save those bright messengers.
 Man has renounced Him, they are ever faithful.
 As follow gentle sheep when calls the shepherd,
 So are obedient to the Lord the stars,
 To-day as when He first created dawn.
 And therefore truth is in them, as in stones,
 In plants, and beasts and trees, in all but man.
 O might we be as silent as are they,
 Intent on learning, mastering our will,
 And humbly listening with an open ear,
 Then might we hear mayhap a word of truth,
 Fresh from His lips, and ringing through the world!
 But ask'st thou whether I have heard myself
 Truth's voice sublime, as spoken in what lives,
 I tell thee: No, and once more say I: No.
 I am but weak, a man devoid of parts,
 Closed is to me the secret heart of things,
 But I have honest zeal, and I respect
 What others do, though powerless myself.
 And if, while but a pupil, not a master,
 I love to dwell on yonder starlight heights—
 Know'st thou, young man, what order means and law?
 Up there reigns order, there is her abode;
 Here is confusion, arbitrary chance.
 Let me be guardian in the tower at night,

And watch the coming of my bright clear stars,
Behold the knowing twinkle of their eyes,
As they surround the throne of the Almighty.

(His voice becomes gradually feebler.)

And when the Lord shall move the hands of time,
Eternity in each stroke of the bell,
Eternal all above and all below,
The bridal chamber—seeks the universe—
With hurried step—the constellations gleam—
While envious spirits—evil omens—

(His voice dies out. His head sinks upon his breast. A pause.

Archduke Ferdinand approaches him anxiously.)

Rudolph (starts up).

Who's here? Ah, yes, yes! What is your desire?
About Matthias you were speaking. Ah!
You've hatched a plan, I see. What is its purport?
Why left he Linz, his place of banishment?

Ferdinand.

And if it were the mere desire for work?

Rudolph.

For work? Is he not actively engaged?
He rides a horse, and runs and wields the foils.
Not love of work inherits he, nor I.
But I'm aware of it, and he is not.
What else desires he? Let me show at least
That not the threatening planets, but your schemes,
The secret plotting of those near of kin,
Made me distrustful, and still keep me so.
'Tis true, it might seem wise to interpose
A wholesome distance betwixt him and me,
Though you do counsel it. What is his wish?

Ferdinand.

He covets.

Rudolph.

Well?

Ferdinand.

In Hungary a command.

Rudolph.

Has ever won a victory he, and where?
 True, Mansfeld's there, a trusty soldier he,
 Who will begrudge him not the idle honor.
 He'll work, Matthias will command. Let him then go!
 But tell him to restrain his energy,
 And to the general's riper mind defer.
 There are too many soldiers, aye, and leaders,
 Who owe allegiance to the new-born faith.
 'Tis not the time, nor is the camp the place
 To wage a contest for religious truth.
 What is't? Why leave you?

Ferdinand.

So as not to hear
 How Austria's ruler, Germany's anointed,
 Speaks for apostates from our holy faith.

Rudolph.

I speak for them? You are inclined to jest.
 But who may dare in troubled times like these
 To cut the tangled knot, confusion's work,
 With one bold stroke?

Ferdinand.

Who dares? I do.

Rudolph.

'Tis lightly said.

Ferdinand.

Said only? It is done.
 In Styria, Carinthia, Carniola,
 At least, the germ of heresy is crushed.
 By order from their prince, a single day
 Saw the conversion of full sixty thousand,
 And twenty thousand more have taken flight.

Rudolph.

And this without my sanction?

Ferdinand.

Sir, I wrote
 Repeatedly, in urgent words, but vainly.

Rudolph (rummaging among the papers on the table).

There is confusion oft among my papers.

Ferdinand.

And therefore I took counsel in the deed.

My lands are purified, would yours were too!

Rudolph.

And twenty thousand had to take to flight?

With wives and children? And in wintry nights?

Ferdinand.

Through pain and hardship, sir, doth teach the Lord.

Rudolph.

This at the very moment when thou woo'st

A Saxon princess, Protestant herself?

Ferdinand.

God gives me strength to conquer my affection.

If you permit, I shall renounce my suit,

And woo the daughter of Bavaria's duke.

Rudolph.

She is not fair.

Ferdinand.

Her heart is, in God's sight.

Rudolph (making a gesture denoting that she is deformed).

Almost—

Ferdinand.

Straight is her thought, her faith, her ways.

Rudolph.

Faith, I admire thee!—Man, stretch out thy hands!

Is't flesh thou showest? Real, living flesh?

And is it blood that courses in these veins?

To woo another than he loves and wants!

With wife and child, full twenty thousand men,

In wintry nights, in hunger, misery!

A shudder numbs me. Give me human beings!

Are living men here? Let them come, O come!

(He strikes the floor vehemently with his cane. The courtiers return.)

Rudolph.

My childhood's days once more come back to me,
 With shuddering belief in ghostly things.

Rudolph bestows upon Matthias the chief command of the army in Hungary. Although fully aware of his brother's lack of ability, he trusts that Mansfeld's counsel will prevail over Matthias's blundering strategy. The archduke, discarding Mansfeld's advice, is disastrously beaten. Though anxious to continue the war, he is induced by Klesel to conclude peace. Having won Protestant support in spite of his secret hostility to the heretics, he openly revolts against Rudolph, and succeeds in occupying Prague, which had repulsed the imperial troops. But once having gained the object of his ambition, he displays all the irresoluteness of his brother. Without Klesel, now a prisoner in the hands of Ferdinand of Styria, he is as a broken reed.

Opposed to the gloomy figure of Matthias is Maximilian, his jovial younger brother. After a vain attempt to become king of Poland, Maximilian has settled down to the quiet enjoyment of the pleasures of life, and particularly those of the table. Epicure as he is, he is endowed with a kind heart and a clearer political vision than that possessed by either Rudolph or Matthias, and he gives ample evidence of his sagacity at the secret council of archdukes, which meets at Pressburg to avert threatening disaster to the state. Besides Maximilian and Matthias, the conference is attended by Ferdinand and Leopold, the emperor's nephews, the latter a lively, generous youth, thoroughly loyal to his uncle. Maximilian distrusts the scheming Klesel, who attends the conference as the spokes-

man of Matthias, and whose advice to conclude peace with the Turks prevails over the vague and contradictory opinions of the archdukes. Matthias's characterization of the irresoluteness of the imperial family,

Such is the curse of Hapsburg's noble house:
Half way to halt, and doubtfully to aim
At half a deed, with half considered means,

has become famous. The entire scene abounds, as do so many others in the play, in delicate delineations of character revealing the author's extraordinary insight into the workings of the Hapsburg mind. A distinguished Vienna critic justly remarks:

"Grillparzer created no character which, as regards convincing truth and absolute lifelikeness, can be compared with the emperor Rudolph II. The poet himself speaks through the emperor, and yet the character is totally different from his own and wholly objective. The emperor is an unmistakable Hapsburg; not a trait of his but betrays his dynasty. Grillparzer knows the Hapsburgs, to the very inmost thoughts of their hearts, and speaks as if he had lived for centuries in the imperial castle of Vienna. With what intimate knowledge did he depict Rudolph I., and with how much greater knowledge still does he portray Rudolph II.!"

Viewed merely as a drama, aside from its historical and psychological significance, it must be admitted that "Ein Bruderzwist" lacks what all the other plays of Grillparzer possess in so preëminent a degree—a fascinating heroine. Lucretia, the only female character, is a shadowy figure, not outlined with sufficient clearness to become really sym-

pathetic. The daughter of a respectable citizen of Prague, she is courted or rather pursued by Don Cæsar, who suspects her of being unfaithful to him, and finally kills her in a fit of passion. The tragic end of the love affair—such as it is—furnishes, however, the occasion for one of the most powerful scenes created by Grillparzer. Don Cæsar has been taken to prison after the murder of Lucretia. The physicians have bled him in order to quiet his fury; but the madman tears the bandage from the wound, and his blood is ebbing away. No one can enter his apartment, which is locked, without the key which is held by Duke Julius of Brunswick, Rudolph's Protestant friend. Terror-stricken, the servant rushes in and asks for the key. The duke is on the point of handing it to the servant when the emperor takes it from him, and throws it into a well. Duke Julius had pleaded to grant Don Cæsar a just trial; but Rudolph exclaims, with unshaken voice:

He has been judged by me, his emperor, his—

Here his strength fails him, and he adds in a voice choked with tears:

His—master!

The pathos of Rudolph's death scene and the poesy of his last words cast a halo over the inconsistencies of the singular character depicted with such power. Rudolph gazes upon the ungrateful city of Prague, spread out below him in all its beauty, and predicts for it an evil future, as he foresees all the horrors of internecine war.

The archdukes Maximilian and Ferdinand kneel before him, and receive his solemn admonition:

Fernand, thou think'st thee strong, and justly so,
Most when thou mean'st to battle for thy God.
Be strong in other ways, be strong, not harsh.
What most thou prizest, thy own firm conviction,
Respect it, too, in others. 'Tis of God,
And He Himself shall wisdom teach the erring.

He hears heavenly music and asks to be taken to the open window, that he may look once more upon the city formerly so dear to him.

Not emperor am I now, but simply one
Who thirsts to feast his eye on men's concerns.
How fair it all is! There below the town,
With streets, and squares, and full of busy men.

Duke Julius.

And yet a while ago your anger cursed it.

Rudolph.

Did I? O, I repent me! With each breath
I suck within me back each hasty word,
Content to bear alone the woes of all.
And thus I bless thee now, thou wayward city.
Where thou hast sinned, may blossom forth the good!
My spirit wanders back to youthful days.
When first I sailed from Spain, where I was taught,
Some one called out that on the dim horizon
The German coast loomed faint. I ran on deck,
With arms outspread, and called: My home, my home!
So now there seems from out eternity
A land to rise, where I shall meet a Father.
Is it dark here? There yonder it is light,
And 'round me are these wings I feel and hear?

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From Spain I come, where harshly I was taught.
I hasten to thee—not my German home,
But home in Heaven. Wilt Thou? I am ready.

(He sinks back.)

In the last act appears Colonel Wallenstein, the warlike harbinger of the new era which is to dawn for Austria and Germany. His name calls up Schiller's masterpiece, and indeed throughout the "Bruderzwist" there are scenes that invite comparison with "Wallenstein." Grillparzer's play ranks, by the consensus of the best critical opinion, with its great model. "German literature," says Laube, "has scarce another historic drama as great as Grillparzer's. 'Wallenstein' has become more popular through the entrancing diction of Schiller, but the historic development of the 'Bruderzwist' is truer and firmer. The portrayal of the emperor Rudolph is an unsurpassed masterpiece."

XXI

GRILLPARZER'S MISCELLANEOUS WRITINGS

GRILLPARZER's lyric vein, which lends to his dramas so unique a charm, found expression in numerous poems, which are a remarkably faithful reflex of his inner life. No writer ever followed more scrupulously Goethe's example in seeking poetic inspiration in the reality of his experiences. His love affairs, his literary aspirations and disappointments, his patriotic and political hopes and fears, the drudgery of official duties, his æsthetic and philosophic views, his quarrels with critics, his personal dislikes and fleeting moods—all this is revealed in lyrics of much force and grace, and particularly in hundreds of epigrams of stinging wit and telling point. But, on the whole, his verse lacks that "inevitableness" and simple charm which captivate us in the truest poetry. The melancholy accents in which he often deploras his sad destiny, as in "Der Bann" (Malediction), or in the cycle entitled "Tristia ex Ponto," touch us deeply, and there are powerful lines in his "Ruins of Campo Vaccino" and other lyrics; yet a certain acerbity of sentiment and obscurity of expression—occasionally even a slovenliness of form of which his dramas fortunately bear so few traces—detract from the value of his poems. Probably few of them will ever become accessible to English readers. Possibly he would have discountenanced even the attempt

to render his dramas into English verse. "No poet can be translated," he remarked, in speaking of Lope de Vega.

Of perhaps greater intrinsic importance are various prose essays, and the numerous notes, aphorisms, and disjointed reflections on literary, philosophic, historical and æsthetic subjects included in his collected works. Jotted down mostly on the spur of the moment, with no thought of publication, and covering, as they do, practically the entire period of his intellectual activity, these notes are all the more interesting from their momentary point of view and not infrequent contradictions—the result of ripper judgment and an invariable desire to be just. His life-long study of the Greek dramatists is evidenced by a weighty paper on the significance of the chorus in the ancient tragedy, and particularly by numerous passages on Euripides, his favorite author among the ancients. An entire volume of the Cotta edition of Grillparzer's works is given up to his contributions to the study of the Spanish theatre, covering hundreds of plays. Of the masterpieces of the Spanish dramatists Grillparzer might often have said, in his moments of despondency, what Lowell wrote after the death of his second wife: "I have at last found something I can read—Calderon." Grillparzer studied Calderon, and even more Lope de Vega, with loving minuteness. Indeed to no other writer did he turn more frequently for inspiration than to the latter. "Lope de Vega," he told Adolf Foglar ("Ansichten über Litteratur, Bühne und Leben"), "is perhaps even more natural than Shakespeare. Although his plots are improbable, nay absurd, and scarcely any of his plays can be performed, they take us to the land of poesy itself. None of the situa-

tions of life are strange to him, he has exhausted them all, and the truth, thoughtfulness, grace and wit of his diction are unapproachable." His comparisons between Lope and Calderon are full of interest. "Calderon has the grand manner, Lope depicts nature itself." "Schiller and Calderon seem to be philosophic writers, but Goethe and Lope are such in fact. The former give us philosophic discussions, the latter give us the result."

Shakespeare's supremacy Grillparzer acknowledged in many passages of remarkable critical insight, but his greatness oppressed rather than stimulated him. "He has spoiled us modern writers, every one of us," he remarked. "He gives us the impression of reality with a power which forces us to believe even in his improbabilities." In an analysis of "Macbeth," which he calls "perhaps the greatest, certainly the truest work of Shakespeare," he exclaims (at the age of twenty-six) almost despairingly: "I am often angry with myself for not giving up the idea of ever writing again, after reading such a creation." Concerning Shakespeare's knowledge of human nature he remarks: "Much has been said about the gift of great poets to depict the most diverse passions and characters foreign to their own nature, and there has been much talk about observing and studying man, and of how Shakespeare gathered material for his Macbeths and Othellos in taverns and among sailors and cart drivers, and how, when he had a bushful of such impressions, he sat down and made a play of it. O the wiseacres! Genius, in my opinion, can give nothing but what it finds within itself, and will never depict any passion or conviction that it does not harbor within its own bosom. Hence it happens

that some young man will look with searching eyes deep into the human heart, while one who has long been familiar with the world and its ways, sharp observer though he may be, will give you nothing but a patchwork of phrases that have been used a hundred times over and over again. Would you then say that Shakespeare must have been a murderer, thief, liar, traitor, ingrate, madman, because he has depicted all these in so masterly a manner? Yes! That is to say, there must have been a tendency to all this within him, although the predominance of reason and the moral sense did not allow it to come to the surface.* Only a man with colossal passions can, in my opinion, become a dramatic poet, but these must be under the sway of reason, and in ordinary life must not show themselves. Would that some poet might read this!" In view of the comparison between "Romeo and Juliet" and "Hero and Leander" that has so often been made, Grillparzer's criticism of Shakespeare's greatest love drama has a peculiar interest. "One must make a great deal of allowance," he writes, "for the fashion of Shakespeare's time in order not to find the flowery phrases in the first act of 'Romeo and Juliet' most insipid. That the change of passion in Romeo is much too rapid and essentially undramatic, no sensible person will deny. Shakespeare himself seems to have felt this, and he has therefore introduced in this place—and nowhere else in the play—a chorus, contrary to the laws of rhythm. . . . Precipitate change of emotion, however true in itself, has ever been one of Shakespeare's principal faults."

There are copious notes on other English writers, par-

*Emerson has expressed a similar thought concerning himself.

ticularly Beaumont and Fletcher, Swift, Byron, and Scott. The following on Swift is characteristic of Grillparzer's moral and æsthetic standards:

"Have the publishers of Swift's works done well in including therein those obscene riddles the composing of which gave the Dean of St. Patrick, then nearly sixty years of age, so much pleasure? I believe they have. For in spite of the inexpressible pain these riddles have given me, they embody a great lesson. That is to say, they show what even the highest intellectual gifts finally lead to if unaccompanied by genuine warmth of heart. But my disappointment was none the less real, for I was on the point of learning to admire Swift, in spite of all his faults."

Among French writers he appreciated no one more fully than Racine. He considered him "as great a poet as ever lived," although one whose ill-fate it was to write at a time "when the heroic passions of the Middle Ages were still smouldering, but were forbidden by a pleasure-loving king to come to the surface, that chivalrous attachment to the fair alone excepted which formal ceremoniousness had degraded to mere gallantry. Fifty years earlier the poet would have represented valor, hatred, blood-thirsty revenge, love of glory and power, in all their mediæval force; fifty years later he would have found these passions so enfeebled that he could have abandoned himself unreservedly to his natural preference for the gentler emotions. As it was, we find these rough elements steeped in a sweetish medium. And that is his fault, although his only one."

Of Molière he says:

"I do not doubt for a moment that Molière portrayed himself in 'Le Misanthrope.' First of all the play teems with those intimate little touches which only he can discover who has himself experienced what is being represented. That the misanthrope's opinion of poetry was Molière's own, no one will deny. This seems to be confirmed even by the unsatisfactory, pointless conclusion of the play—a characteristic feature of every poetic work which is the result of self-irony, as witness Goethe's 'Wilhelm Meister' and 'Tasso.' How Molière was tortured by jealousy—well-founded jealousy, indeed—is shown by the story of his life. And how sad was this life as a whole! We see a poet, in the real sense of the word, who is intent upon what is great and noble, and who yet is frightened off by repeated failure from the representation of serious characters upon the stage, and is forced to play the merry-andrew and clown, in all probability despising himself, in the midst of all the applause of the multitude, for sinning against his own better self. In society, his position was far below those whom he could not look upon as his equals. Even the 'Misanthrope' was a failure, as not being farcical enough. Was not the natural result a hostile attitude toward social conditions? I am impelled to think of Raimund, who, while occupying a far lower rank than Molière, yet bears in this respect some resemblance to him. How closely Molière was drawn toward emotional poetry—from which indeed he was kept back only by the spirit of the age, and perhaps by the commanding influence of his friend Boileau—is shown by various passages throughout his works, and particularly by the little fragment 'Mélécerte.' The monologue of the heroine

in the second act testifies to a depth of sentiment far in advance of his time, and rare even in Racine."

Grillparzer's striking analysis of Rousseau's character may in some respects challenge comparison with Morley's portrayal of the great Frenchman:

"How surprised Rousseau would have been if any one had called him the most complete egotist that ever lived! A man who liked in all with whom he came in contact merely the ideas which he could associate with them, but never the persons themselves; who therefore never had a real friend, nor ever found a woman who truly loved him; who put his children into the foundling hospital because they interfered with the life plan he had mapped out for himself, and was ever after utterly indifferent to their fate; who, in order to remain unfettered, kept the woman who showed such devotion for him, as his mistress, instead of rendering her happy by the name of wife; who considered himself the centre of creation, and all that happened around him merely as having happened for his sake; who, if an earthquake or the sudden eruption of a volcano had disturbed him in writing, would have looked upon it as a conspiracy against his person; whose desire for distinction was so great that because he could not possess all the outward tokens of it alone, he preferred to renounce distinction altogether; who despised the world because he did not know how to live in it; despised society because he could not adapt himself to its tone; who sought solitude because in it he found what alone interested him in this world—himself, his thoughts and emotions. If all this had been told him by some one who at the same time professed brotherly sentiments, what would he have answered?

He would never have believed him, though all of what I have said is true—without necessarily implying that Rousseau was morally the worse for it. His condition was that of a being completely dominated by his thoughts. He believed that he was controlled by his emotions, but the reverse was the case; his emotions invariably resulted from his thoughts, and from them alone. Whatever offered no scope for his ideas did not touch his emotions, as witness his children, who crossed his plans, and therefore had to be taken out of his way. Never did he speak a truer word of himself than when he said: 'I must be left to my thoughts if I am to love' (*J'ai besoin de me recueillir pour aimer*), and herein lies the key to his life. Whoever abandons himself completely to his thoughts, particularly in solitude, will find that they swallow up the whole world, feeding everywhere on the nourishment they crave, and finally leaving him who is their prey alone in an empty and joyless desert."

The stoical side of Grillparzer's own character rebelled against sentimentalists of whatever type, and Mme. de Staël's querulous complaints in her banishment found in him a scathing critic:

"In what did her misfortune in exile consist? In the fact that she could no longer shine in those Paris circles for which she had so silly an attachment. Her lamentations are a crime against all those who at that time had real cause for complaint."

Much that is incisive and telling may be found in his notes on Voltaire, Lamartine, Victor Hugo, Delavigne, and other French writers, as well as in those on Dante, Ariosto, Machiavelli and other great Italians; but perhaps

nothing is better worth quoting, as illustrative of Grillparzer's breadth of view, than this critical notice of a German translation of Ghiberti's chronicle of Florence:

"I must confess that few books have made so deep an impression upon me. While Benvenuto Cellini's 'Life' shows us the heaven-storming Titan, who, intent upon his work in his inexhaustible power, regards all those beside and around him as so many disturbing and antagonizing opponents, Ghiberti's gentle, perhaps somewhat feminine, nature clings with a glorifying love to his contemporaries, and affords us a picture of those days the equal of which no other epoch in art can show. The Michael-Angelo-like Brunelleschi, the joyous Donatello, Masaccio, Filippo Lippi—monk and painter—the wonderful Leonardo da Vinci, in his early beginnings, and the peaceful painter of Fiesole—briefly mentioned yet throwing over us, as it were, a shimmer of his angelic halo—added to all these a world of artists of the second and third rank, whom we see not only in sharply defined outline, but in all their relations of life, and in situations such as to-day are found only in novels, but which those days produced in abundance. What an age! There are entire countries whose history from the creation of the world to the year of our Lord 1833 offers not half as much of real interest as little Florence under the Medici. Truly, he who espies at a distance an Italian in the street ought to uncover his head, and say to himself: 'Here is one of those who are the fathers of modern civilization.' I do not doubt that many will ridicule such an idea. Let those not read Ghiberti's book; all others will enjoy it."

Grillparzer thought much on philosophical subjects, but he subscribed to no philosophic or religious creed. In his conception of duty he was a disciple of Kant; the speculations of Plato, Spinoza, Hegel, Fichte, and Schelling attracted him, but did not dominate his thought. He devoted much space in his writings to Hegel's philosophy, and directed against it some of his keenest satirical shafts. Personally, the men liked each other. When, in 1826, Grillparzer visited Hegel in Berlin, he told him frankly that he was totally unacquainted with his philosophy. "All the better," replied the philosopher. "I found Hegel," writes Grillparzer in his autobiography, "personally as pleasant, sensible and conciliatory as I subsequently found his system abstruse and aggressive." Hegel, on his part, described Grillparzer in a letter to Gans as "a very simple, sensible, and serious man." Much has been said by some Grillparzer students about Hegel's influence on his political ideas, especially as to his conception of the functions of the state. Even the key to Grillparzer's "modernity" has been sought in Hegel's dialectics. Whatever the poet may have unconsciously imbibed from the philosopher, he has not left us in doubt as to his opinion of Hegel's teachings. He summed up his judgment, in 1860, as follows:

"Hegel's philosophy, the most monstrous abortion of human conceit, seems to have had its final day as a system; but like a restless ghost it continues to haunt most branches of human knowledge, particularly history and æsthetics."

Some years previously he had written: "I look upon Hegel's philosophy as I do upon Christianity. From the

twaddle of theologians one might conclude that after the atonement of Christ, and the wiping out of the original sin, mankind ought necessarily to have improved; but men are as bad now as they ever were before. Just as natural was it to expect that after Hegel had demonstrated the final cause and the necessary connection between knowledge and existence, the effect on the various specific doctrines of philosophy would have become apparent. But they have all remained precisely where they were before Hegel."

As to the indirect influence of Hegel on the German people, Grillparzer said:

"The harm that Hegel's philosophy has done to German culture may perhaps be summarized as follows: First of all, he has through his speculations, which brooked no contradiction, suppressed the natural expression of thought—what is ordinarily called common sense. Secondly, his philosophy, by its obscurity, nay unintelligibility, has reared blind followers, who make themselves heard everywhere. And by its assurance that the world has now become transparent, and that the riddle of the universe has been solved, his philosophy has bred a self-conceit the like of which never existed before."

Metaphysical theorizing in general he considered out of place in an age where the progress of the natural sciences and the increased material demands due to overpopulation lead man to wrest from Nature her inmost secrets. "When once the spirit of investigation has become universal, it will not easily set barriers to itself, least of all will it allow arbitrary outside interference to interpose them. Reason is quite willing to admit that there are some

riddles it cannot solve, and it recognizes as a benefit any bridging of the gulf it cannot cross, but only in so far as what is offered is not opposed to its very essence, and commands respect in itself. Nevermore, however, will reason tolerate any interference on the part of tradition with the established laws of Nature and the foundations of moral order. Creation out of nothing, transubstantiation, original sin, and redemption through merit other than our own will probably never again be seriously discussed. But all this may long survive in a sort of mysterious indefiniteness, and by reason of its moral value Christianity may—indeed, let us hope it will—continue to accompany mankind to the end. No power on earth, however, will succeed in reviving religious antagonisms. These cannot be forcibly brought back into modern life; any attempt in this direction would result in their dissolving into their real nothingness.”

Politically loyal to established authority, Grillparzer recognized in the domain of intellect no other law than that of absolute devotion to his ideals. He was no respecter of learned formulas, and did not bow before any literary idol. One of his most elaborate essays, entitled “Zur Literargeschichte,” is a lively protest against the methods of literary historians, particularly those of Germany, who deify the great, bolster up the mediocre, and confuse the reader by arbitrary rules and superficial generalizations. At a time when there is a notable dearth of talent, they are always ready, he says, with the consolation that the country is merely passing through a period of transition, and that the future (provided every one followed in the path marked out by them) would certainly bring

forth a new crop of geniuses. "That in this way something extraordinary is bound to come, they never doubt for an instant." "I remember in this connection," he adds, "a political journalist who in 1848 was greatly surprised that the general upheaval had produced no great man, according to the rule that revolutions always bring great men to the surface—which is true enough, provided great men happen to be around at that time."

That form of Teutomania which converted the study of German folk-lore into a fetich, and credited the German nation as a whole with the talents possessed by a few individuals, Grillparzer covered with ridicule:

"It was suddenly discovered that the German nation was poetic to its very core, in spite of the fact that the poems which had been unearthed, with the exception of the mysterious Nibelungenlied, bore their foreign origin openly on their face. It was assumed that there existed popular epics of an antediluvian age, or at least fragments of such, which some Middle-High-German pedant had patched together, thereby producing some extraordinary work of genius in a purely mechanical way. These popular songs, written by no one in particular, were credited to the uncouth masses, and poetic genius became thenceforth superfluous. The people and a few pedants provided all that was necessary."

Like all great dramatists who take their subjects where they find them, and like all critics who respect literature of whatever kind, except the *genre ennuyeux*, Grillparzer had no tolerance for that æsthetic craving which looks in every dramatic masterpiece for the underlying theory. Literary historians and writers who, with all their suscepti-

bility for what is beautiful, are powerless to create anything that bears beauty's stamp—feminine geniuses Jean Paul calls them—had laid down the axiom that religious feeling was the impelling motive of the dramatic masterpieces of Greece and Spain, and had argued that the modern enfeeblement of religious belief was responsible for the decay of the drama. Grillparzer answered them: "Look at Calderon. A hundred times he has used Catholic superstition (which is nothing but masked pagan or, to speak plainly, human superstition) and scarcely once religious belief. Yet the superstition in his verses thrills men who despise it in religion. Explain this to me, if you can, ye old modern Germans!"

Grillparzer's critical spirit was nowhere more searchingly employed than in his study of Goethe. In their totality his utterances show that, with all his admiration for Germany's greatest genius, his honest nature sometimes protested against the towering universal supremacy thoughtlessly claimed for him. One of his profoundest criticisms (written in 1841) refers to the "Elective Affinities":

"What is most disturbing in the 'Wahlverwandschaften' is the offensive importance given from the very beginning to the laying out of the park, the petty architectural details, and other things of this kind—an importance equal to that of the main incidents. We feel as though we were reading a chapter from the life of Goethe himself, who partially paralyzed his incomparable gifts by taking almost as much interest in such pastimes as in the most important concerns of his real life. There must be a gradation of interest, and what is lavished on minor inci-

dents is by so much withdrawn from the main action. By such spinning out of details, he, moreover, deprived himself of the necessary space in which to transform the purely mechanical element of his 'Wahlverwandtschaften' into the psychological or, rather, moral. Women like Charlotte do not transfer their affections at a bound, and many steps in the scale of events and emotions are required until women like Ottilie turn even in thought to misconduct or sin. . . . But granted all this, what a wonderful masterpiece this work is! As regards knowledge of human nature, wisdom, depth of sentiment, power of description, character drawing, and poetic idealization of the apparently commonplace, no literature can show its equal. Before one has reached the age of fifty, one can scarcely fully appreciate it, but it is as much a part of the curse as of the blessing of the years of maturity that one can appreciate it then. If I could claim its authorship as a gift, I should not care to have written it. The passionate exaltation of a Byron may perhaps disregard all limits, and, indeed, poetry derives its very being from the overstepping of all bounds, but the nearer any literary work is to actual life, the more is it bound to respect that without which life is an abomination and a horror."

The key-note of Grillparzer's own intellectual life was sincerity and clearness, hence he was repelled by the obscure symbolism of the second part of "Faust." "With advancing age," he wrote, "but perhaps even more through the bureaucratic activity of his last years, Goethe lost much of that vivifying and visualizing power which alone creates images and awakens emotions. The characters which he had endowed with all the wealth of his youth

had faded into dreams and bloodless shadows, which may still, in some respects, command our admiration, but toward which we are no longer drawn by real sympathy. Perhaps we might say that in his last days Goethe had a natural desire to leave none of the children of his intellect unprovided for. . . . He was thus impelled to weld together certain parts and fragments originally never intended for each other's company, and he left the care of providing for the unity of the whole to the admiration of future generations and to the magic of his name."

In comparing Schiller with Goethe, Grillparzer says: "Schiller can and ought to be imitated, for he is the highest example of his kind, and hence a model for those akin to him. Goethe, however, is an exceptional being, comprising within himself so many half-contradictory qualities that the like of them may perhaps not again be found united in the course of centuries. He stands alone, and even were we inclined to consider him as the greatest of a species, it would be a species of a rather questionable kind. Fortunately, he would tower immeasurably above those next to him in greatness."

Grillparzer touches upon the besetting sin of so many dramatists, in saying of Schiller: "If one could only eliminate the two monologues of Elizabeth and Leicester in 'Maria Stuart'! It is Schiller's greatest fault that he speaks too often himself instead of allowing his characters to speak. Even the monologues of Wallenstein spoil much of the good impression previously created. It is, however, easier to criticise such things than to do better one's self. He who knows how innumerable are the threads that cross and recross each other in the handling

of a vast dramatic web, will easily forgive the author if now and then a few slip through his fingers."

The critical acuteness which Grillparzer displayed in judging others he was only too ready to turn against himself, as witness the notes grouped together as "Studies Appertaining to the Author's Own Works." We have seen that he did himself far less than justice in adopting as final the contemporary estimates of "Medea" and "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen." In his moments of gloom he went even further in distrust of his powers. In his testament, drawn up during the revolutionary troubles of 1848, he charged Katharina Fröhlich with the disposition of his posthumous works, but enjoined her from giving to the world two of his greatest dramas by this clause: "It is my wish that, of my unprinted works, the two apparently finished tragedies, 'Emperor Rudolph II.' and 'Libussa,' be not printed, but without examination destroyed. I wrote these during the time of the worst intellectual thralldom, at long intervals, in order to occupy my thoughts, rather than with any real interest and enthusiasm. In their present shape they merely embody the general plan and ideas; the execution itself I postponed for better days. These better days have never come, and I do not want to see my name disgraced by such lifeless and unsatisfactory sketches." There is no reason to doubt that the two dramas were then substantially finished as we now know them, and it is fortunate indeed that their author lived to ward off the fate he had intended for them.

XXII

GRILLPARZER AND BEETHOVEN

GRILLPARZER's relations to music and musicians colored his entire life. Prof. Eduard Hanslick, the famous Vienna musical critic, said of him: "There is no other great poet who has occupied himself with music so seriously and lovingly, and has so fully grasped its very essence, as Grillparzer. I know of no poet who from his inmost soul has given out such a wealth of profound and original thoughts on music and musical works, and has so clearly expressed what he felt." Hanslick was a consistent opponent of Richard Wagner, and his admiration for Grillparzer's conservative musical theories will perhaps not be fully shared by modern music lovers.

Grillparzer inherited from his mother a boundless admiration for Mozart. She herself had often seen Mozart, and Haydn in her father's home, where composers and artists were wont to assemble. In the days of Grillparzer's youth the love of music, which has always been characteristic of the gay Kaiserstadt, amounted to a real passion. The expression of what people thought on political and even on literary matters was frowned down upon at that time of intellectual repression, and music was resorted to as the vehicle of vague sentiment and aspiration.

Grillparzer met Schubert in the home of the Fröhlichs, where the composer was a frequent guest. The two young men were from the first drawn to each other. Grillparzer

was, next to Bauernfeld, one of Schubert's most intimate friends, and the poet early recognized in the composer the legitimate successor of Mozart. In artless verse Grillparzer has characterized Schubert's originality and unconventional, personal charm. When the great composer died, Grillparzer was asked to write his epitaph. He chose the simple words: "Death has entombed here a rich treasure, but even more beautiful hopes."

Grillparzer has left on record his recollections of Beethoven, which date back to the year 1804 or 1805. The boy saw him first at an evening entertainment at the house of his uncle Sonnleithner, a well-known music publisher and patron of art. Among the guests were Beethoven, Cherubini and an eccentric abbé by the name of Vogler. A year or two later Grillparzer spent the summer with his parents in the village of Heiligenstadt, near Vienna. "Our dwelling," he relates, "looked out upon the garden, while the rooms toward the street had been rented by Beethoven. The two dwellings were connected by a corridor, which led to the staircase. My brothers and I took little notice of the queer man—now become stouter and dressed very negligently, even slovenly—as he shot past us with a growl. My mother, however, who was a passionate lover of music, would every now and then, when she heard him play on the piano, step out upon the common corridor, and, standing not close to his door, but directly in front of ours, listen with rapt attention. This had, perhaps, happened a few times when, on one occasion, Beethoven's door suddenly opened, and he stepped out. He perceived my mother, hurried back, and immediately after, with his hat on, rushed down the stairs and out into

the street. From this moment on he never more touched the piano in his room. In vain did my mother, who had no other chance of communicating with him, assure him through his man-servant that not only would she never again listen to his playing, but that the door leading from our room to the corridor would remain closed, and that all the inmates of our dwelling would thereafter use the roundabout exit into the garden instead of the common staircase. Beethoven remained obdurate."

In the course of a subsequent summer young Grillparzer again saw Beethoven in his country retreat. The composer was then in Döbling, another favorite suburban resort of the Viennese, where Grillparzer was visiting his grandmother. Beethoven was then paying court to the pretty daughter of a peasant named Flohberger. Neither father nor child enjoyed the best reputation. "I still see Beethoven before me," relates Grillparzer, "coming up the Hirschengasse, in his right hand a white handkerchief, which trailed after him on the ground, and finally stopping in front of the gate of Flohberger's courtyard, inside of which the frivolous beauty was standing upon a hay or manure wagon, laughingly manipulating its contents with a pitchfork. I never saw Beethoven address her; he simply stood silent and gazed, until the girl, who doubtless found peasant boys much more to her taste, excited his ire either by some word of mockery or by her persistent ignoring of him. Then he would suddenly turn about and dash off, all of which did not prevent him from taking his place at the gate next time. Indeed, his interest in the girl went so far that when her father, because of some drunken row, was put into the village

jail, Beethoven interceded in person for his release before the assembled village authorities, on which occasion he, in his usual manner, berated those worthies so unmercifully that he came within an ace of sharing the captivity of his protégé."

Grillparzer did not really make Beethoven's acquaintance until some time after the performance of "*König Ottokars Glück und Ende*," when he was informed by Count Dietrichstein, the nominal head of the two imperial theatres, that Beethoven had expressed a desire to have a libretto from his pen. Grillparzer, after some hesitation—due to a doubt whether the composer, at that time already completely deaf, was still able to write an opera—consented to furnish a libretto, and chose for it the subject of *Melusine*. When the book was ready, he sent it to Beethoven, leaving it to his judgment whether to use it or not.

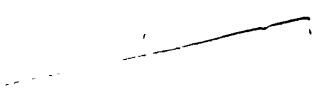
"A few days afterward," he writes, "Schindler, then Beethoven's business manager—the same who afterward wrote his biography—called on me and told me that his master, who was indisposed, requested me to visit him. I dressed, and we started immediately for Beethoven's house. He lived at that time in the Landstrasse, and I found him lying, in untidy night attire, on a disarranged bed, a book in his hand. At the head of the bed there was a small door, leading, as I subsequently perceived, to a little cabinet containing some eatables, on which he kept an eye. When a servant finally appeared, with butter and eggs, Beethoven, although engaged in animated conversation, could not refrain from casting a searching glance at the quantity of food carried out of the cabinet, which

gave me a sad insight into the troubles of his domestic life.

"When we entered, Beethoven rose from his bed, gave me his hand, overwhelmed me with expressions of esteem, and immediately began talking about his opera. 'Your work is right here,' he said, pointing to his heart; 'in a few days I shall go to the country, and then I shall at once begin to set it to music. But the hunters' chorus, with which the libretto opens, troubles me. Weber used four bugle-horns in his chorus, you will therefore see that I shall have to have eight, and what then?' Although I could not see the logic of his argument, I told him that the hunters' chorus might easily be spared altogether, without injury to the whole—a concession with which he seemed to be very much pleased."

Grillparzer was entirely indifferent to the commercial aspects of their partnership, on which Beethoven laid great stress. In spite, however, of his eagerness to draw up a contract at once, and his apparent entire satisfaction with the libretto as it stood, Beethoven for some reason delayed the execution of the work; and when, in the course of the summer, Grillparzer visited him in the country, there was no further talk about the opera between them. Their conversation was carried on by Grillparzer's writing down what he had to say on loose sheets of paper, which have been preserved.

"I remember vividly," continues the autobiography, "that Beethoven, when we sat down at the table, went into the adjoining room and brought out five bottles of wine. One of these he put before Schindler's plate, one before his own, and three he placed in a row before me, probably



in order to indicate, in his naïvely ignorant, good-natured way, that I was at liberty to drink as much as I pleased. When I started to drive back to the city, without Schindler, who remained in Hetzendorf, Beethoven insisted on accompanying me. He sat down next to me in the open wagon, but instead of going merely to the limits of his district, he drove with me back to the city, at the gates of which he alighted; and after a hearty handshake, he started alone upon his return tramp of an hour and a half. As he left the carriage, I saw a paper lying in the place where he had sat. Thinking he had forgotten it, I motioned to him to return, but he shook his head, and laughing loudly, as if delighted with the success of his ruse, he ran off with increased speed in the opposite direction. I opened the paper, and found that it contained the exact amount of the fare which I had agreed upon with the driver. So estranged had he become, through his manner of living, from all worldly customs, that it never entered his mind what an insulting proceeding this might be considered by any one else. I took the matter as he intended it, and laughingly paid the driver with the money presented to me.

"I saw him—I do not know where—but once more after that. He then told me: 'Your opera is ready.' Whether he meant, 'all thought out,' or whether the countless notebooks in which he jotted down, for future elaboration, detached thoughts and notes, intelligible to him only, contained fragments of that opera, I cannot say. Certain it is that after his death not a single note was found which could have been identified as relating to our common work. For my part, I remained true to my reso-

lution not to remind him, in any way, of my libretto, and as I found it burdensome to converse with him by means of a writing tablet, I never more approached him until, dressed in black, and a burning taper in my hand, I walked behind his coffin.

"Two days before, Schindler had come to me in the evening with the announcement that Beethoven was dying, and that his friends expected me to prepare an address, which the actor Anschütz was to deliver at his grave. I was all the more shocked as I had heard practically nothing about Beethoven's illness; but I endeavored to collect my thoughts, and the next morning I began to write down the address. I had proceeded as far as the second half when Schindler again entered my room, to call for what he had ordered; for Beethoven, he told me, had just died. My heart sank within me, tears streamed from my eyes and—as had happened to me on other occasions when I was overcome by genuine emotion while writing—I was not able to finish in the same spirit in which I had begun. The address was, however, delivered.

"I may say that I truly loved Beethoven. If I can relate but little concerning my talks with him, the principal reason is that I am not interested in what an artist has to say, but in what he does. If talking were a criterion of artistic capacity, Germany would be as full of artists as, in reality, she is devoid of them. Among the things Beethoven told me, I remember his high praise of Schiller, and his remark that he considered the lot of poets a far happier one than that of musicians, inasmuch as their field was so much wider. I recollect that his estimate of Weber's 'Euryanthe' was no higher than my own. On

the whole, it was probably the successes of Weber that suggested to him the thought of writing another opera himself. But his imagination had become so unbridled that no libretto in the world would have been able to confine his creations within given limits. He looked far and wide for one, but could not find it."

Grillparzer's funeral oration is worthy of its subject. We hear Beethoven's own strains in such passages:

"As the leviathan scours the main, so he traverses the realms of art in his flight. From the cooing of the dove to the rolling of the thunder, from the subtlest combinations of all the resources of an arbitrary technique to that awe-inspiring height where the artistic impulse gives way to a lawless caprice, reminding us of the warring powers of nature, he seizes everything, makes everything his own. Whoever comes after him will not continue in his strain, but will have to begin anew, for Beethoven's work ends only where art itself ends."

Grillparzer's own heart is laid bare when he speaks:

"He was an artist, but he was also a man, a man in every sense, even the highest. Because he shut himself out from the world, he was called its enemy; and because he shunned the display of emotion, he was considered hard-hearted. Alas! he who knows himself to be such does not flee the world. The finest points are dulled most easily, and they bend or break. It is the superabundance of sentiment that avoids sentimental display. He fled the world because he found within the entire range of his loving heart not a single weapon with which to oppose it. He withdrew from men after having given them his all and received nothing in return. He re-

mained solitary because he found no one like himself. But until the last moment he had a human heart for all men, a paternal one for his kin, and all he had and was belonged to all the world." Six months later Grillparzer composed a second address, in similar strain, which was delivered at the unveiling of Beethoven's tombstone.

Grillparzer's recollections of Beethoven are supplemented by the preserved records, on loose sheets, of his remarks written down by him while conversing with the deaf composer. On one of these sheets we find Grillparzer suggesting to him an expedient which, as Ehrhard remarks, is nothing less than the employment of a *Leitmotiv* in the manner of Richard Wagner. "I have asked myself," he wrote, "whether it would not be advisable to mark each appearance or action of 'Melusine' by some catching and regularly recurring melody. Why could not the overture begin with this melody?"

On another occasion Grillparzer asks Beethoven: "Are you never going to get married?" Beethoven's reply may be guessed. Grillparzer rejoins sarcastically: "Women who have minds have no body, and those who have bodies have no mind."

The leaves commemorating the last conversation that took place between the two men, early in 1826, reflect the melancholy to which Grillparzer was then a prey, shortly after he broke off his engagement to Katharina Fröhlich. The sentences, brief and detached, are full of meaning. "The censorship has killed me.—One has to emigrate to North America if he wants to give free expression to his thoughts.—I have become stupid.—The musician is not subject to censorship.—The literary men of other countries

are opposed to everything that comes from Austria.— In spite of everything I love Austria. — At bottom my works are finding less and less favor.—I have the misfortune to be a hypochondriac. — My works give me no pleasure. — Ah, if I had the thousandth part of your energy and firmness!”

During his last interview with Beethoven Grillparzer expressed himself disparagingly about Weber, whose “Eury-anthe,” he said, contained more poetry than music. The North Germans, he added, reason too much, and Weber is merely a critic turned composer. He considered the critical habit characteristic of the present age. “The world has lost its innocence, and without it one cannot create or enjoy a work of art.” Ehrhard surmises that in answer to all these despondent reflections Beethoven must have exhorted Grillparzer to take courage; for on the same day the violinist Holz spoke to Beethoven about Grillparzer’s lack of firmness and remarked: “The lecture you have given him must have made a great impression on him.” Holz mentioned “Melusine” to Beethoven in terms of praise, but the composer emphatically condemned the hunters’ chorus. Grillparzer’s libretto subsequently passed into the hands of the composer, Konradin Kreutzer, who set it to music, without, however, achieving the success scored by his “Nachtlager von Granada.”

With all his appreciation of Beethoven, Grillparzer never yielded to him that unquestioning admiration which he lavished on Mozart. In one of his semi-autobiographical notes, written in 1834, and intended for his own eye only, he remarked: “In spite of Beethoven’s great merits, which cannot be overestimated, his influence on

art has been unfortunate"; and he gives the following reasons:

"1. The first and foremost musical prerequisite, the delicacy and accuracy of the ear, suffers through his daring combinations and his far too frequent tonal ranting and roaring.

"2. His ultra-lyric leaps transgress all conceptions of musical order and unity to such an extent as to make it impossible finally to take in the whole of the composition.

"3. His frequent infraction of rules tends to make them appear superfluous, whereas rules are invaluable as the result of good sense and clear thought.

"4. An innate predilection causes him to substitute for the sentiment of beauty more and more the effort to attain what is interesting, powerful, violent, and intoxicating—a change which, of all the arts, music can least afford to undergo."

In various epigrams Grillparzer returns to this searching analysis. The Ninth Symphony appears to him confused and impenetrable, but he adds: "Whether it please me or not, its glory is nevertheless complete and safe, for the world knows that every 'Faust' has its second part." And when past eighty, he still reminded the "Beethoven enthusiasts": "Like you I have held Beethoven in high honor, but with this difference: Where your admiration begins, mine ends."

Ehrhard furnishes a luminous explanation of Grillparzer's peculiar attitude toward Beethoven. What he chiefly admired in Mozart was the caressing beauty of his melodies and his transparent perfection of form. He was the less inclined to overlook Beethoven's disregard of rules

as he thought it due to two causes: He was deaf and he was a German. His deafness, which kept him apart from men, had the result of removing him from the best artistic influences of Vienna. "The German in Beethoven," Ehrhard remarks, "on whom Vienna had imposed habits of intellectual refinement, and to whom it had imparted that happy Austrian endowment—the wisdom to remain within the limits of a beautiful and concrete reality—lost in his solitude polish and discipline."

Grillparzer took part in the heated controversy as to the respective merits of Italian and German opera, which divided Vienna into two hostile camps, and he naturally sided with the exponents of melody pure and simple, in other words, with Rossini against Weber. He jots down this remark in 1819: "I think of writing a counterpart to Lessing's 'Laokoon': 'Rossini, or Concerning the Limits of Music and Poetry.' I would have to show how absurd it is to degrade music in opera so as to make it a mere slave to poetry, and to demand that the former, in disregard of its proper sphere, be content to ape imperfectly in sound what poetry clearly expresses in thought."

In speaking of the different spheres of the two arts, he remarks: "Music acts directly upon our senses and our nerves, touching reason but indirectly, while poetry affects our emotions only through the medium of reason"; and, a year later, he indites, with all his poetic warmth, this passage:

"If operatic music were intended merely to express what the poet has already uttered, it had better be silent altogether. I want to read the words of the poet alone; musical accompaniment is not meant to be merely the

trick of a juggler who attempts to do, with manifestly insufficient means, that which some one else has already done more simply, sensibly and satisfactorily. Or is it the intention, perhaps, to strengthen the impresson of the poem? That may be true of poems which are no poems, as in the case of the text of Italian operas; but then you must not touch truly poetic works, and stop the complaint that only poetasters are willing to write librettos. But in reality this is not so. All the arts, even though sprung from a common root, are strictly divided at their crowning summits. Where poetry ends, music begins. Where the poet no longer finds words, there let the musician's tones speak. O melody, who without the aid of thought and explanatory word, comest directly from Heaven and drawest our souls back to Heaven—he who truly knows thy power will never make music a mere handmaid of poetry! He may, perhaps, give precedence to the latter—and I believe poetry deserves the higher place, as man takes rank above the child—but he will assign to the former her own independent realm, and will look upon both as sisters and not as master and servant or, at best, guardian and ward."

However deep and permanent the influence which music exercised on Grillparzer's life—there is scarcely one play of his which does not betray his love for it—there were moments when he rebelled against the very solace which it brought him. He analyzed its effect upon himself, as he analyzed—and at times deplored—the effect which Shakespeare or other great minds produced upon his poetic sensibilities. His diaries dwell often on these points. During one of the gloomiest periods of his life, while struggling with "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn," he wrote:

"What kept me recently from poetic production was the study of music and counterpoint. I had begun it when the quarrels concerning the performance of 'Ottokar,' and my consequent disgust, were at their height, for the main purpose of diverting my thoughts from a matter which tormented me continuously, and threatened to make me ill. I had always had a strong inclination toward the study of counterpoint, and I was impelled by a desire to know the foundation of an art which, as regards the emotional effect upon me, was always a formidable rival of poetry. The remedy proved efficacious. I was equal to the struggle with the censor, and could brave the terrors of the first performance. The misunderstanding and intentional misinterpretation on the part of the public and the critics I bore even more easily, but at the same time the thought of tonal relations took such a hold of me that even in my dreams I was constantly busy with music and counterpoint. I possess two qualities, which have sometimes been of considerable use to me, but have even more frequently done me the greatest possible harm. The first is this: there is in my mind room for but a single subject, which for the time being swallows up everything else, and the second: what I have once begun, as the result of firm resolve, I abandon only with the extremest reluctance. It was owing to the first quality that music soon engrossed me to the exclusion of everything else, while on account of the second I could not make up my mind to change my extraordinary method of studying. I persevered in the hope of being able to find time for music between my other occupations—a hope that was never realized. Finally, from fear of too constant a preoccupation, I became more

lax in my methods, and thus I lost the fruits of my varied efforts."

We have Hanslick's testimony to the genuineness of Grillparzer's musical talent. Of the three compositions which Katharina Fröhlich showed him—musical settings of Horace's ode "Integer vitæ scelerisque purus" and of Heine's "Du schönes Schiffermädchen," and a song entitled "Life is strife, a struggle without cessation"—Hanslick wrote: "These compositions attest Grillparzer's musical knowledge and fine musical feeling. They prove, in their simplicity and correctness, that the great poet not only knew how to sing inspired hymns to music, but that he also practised the art like an artist."

XXIII

CONCLUSION

GRILLPARZER's personality exercised a singular fascination over all who came in close contact with him. In his youth he was the favorite of the best social circles of Vienna. The novelist Caroline Pichler, whose home was in the early part of the last century a rendezvous of the chosen spirits of the city, describes his appearance in 1817 as follows:

"At last Schreyvogel introduced Grillparzer to us. I shall never forget that evening, nor the favorable impression which he produced upon all. He could not be called good-looking, but his slender figure, of more than middle height, his fine blue eyes, which gave an expression of kindness and depth to his pale features, and a wealth of auburn hair, all combined to give him an appearance which one could not easily forget, even if the treasures of his highly cultivated mind and noble soul had not so unmistakably manifested themselves in everything he did and said. Such was the general impression in our little circle. Face to face with the handsome Oehlenschlaeger,* Grillparzer attracted everybody by the stamp of his intellect."

More than one beautiful and gifted woman came under his spell. Female charms inspired Grillparzer as they had inspired Goethe, and if there are in the case of the Vienna poet no such glowing effusions on record as the sage of

*The famous Danish dramatist, who was then visiting Vienna.

Weimar addressed to Frau von Stein, we find in his diaries not a few passages pointing to the depth of his affection for Charlotte von Paumgarten and Marie Daffinger, who lent their traits to Medea and Hero. We have in his diaries but the indirect self-revelations of a genius ever ready to magnify his human frailties, but who at the same time deprecated the sickly sentimentality which takes a greater interest in the author's person than in his writings. A curious incident in Grillparzer's life, related at length in his diaries, refers to the story of a young girl, Marie von Piquot, who, unknown to the poet, pined away in a hopeless passion for him, which was only disclosed to her parents in her touching testament.

Grillparzer's lack of decision in literary matters is attested by the many unfinished projects and sketches found among his papers. The most important of these fragments date from the beginnings of his literary career and reveal extraordinary dramatic precocity and historical knowledge. At the age of seventeen, he wrote two acts and part of the third of a play entitled "Robert, Herzog von der Normandie"; at the age of nineteen, two acts of "Alfred der Grosse" and one act of "Spartakus." The promise of these early productions is almost as remarkable as the actual achievement of Lope's "Verdadero Amante," written at the age of fourteen or fifteen. Grillparzer roamed over the entire field of history in search of plots and characters, and he accumulated during his life a mass of plans and suggestions for future elaboration equal to that found in Hawthorne's notebooks. Oliver Cromwell appears in a "Lucretia Creinwill," begun at the age of sixteen; Henry II. of England in a

"Rosamunde Clifford"; Lorenzo de' Medici in a fragment entitled "Die Pazzi," dating from 1812; Henry IV. of France in a delightfully humorous first act of "Heinrich der Vierte" (1813); and Biblical history, as well as the history of Rome, was ransacked by him for comprehensive dramatic plans.


Compared with the wealth of his ideas and the extent of his studies, the total of Grillparzer's dramatic achievement appears quantitatively small. But he threw all the power of his genius into every one of his matured plays. He left to the world, aside from his "Ahnfrau" and "Das Leben ein Traum," whose place in literature is still undetermined, ten dramatic works of the first rank—"Sappho," "Das goldene Vliess," "König Ottokars Glück und Ende," "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn," "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen," "Weh dem, der lügt!" "Libussa," "Esther," "Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg" and "Die Jüdin von Toledo." Nothing furnishes more convincing proof of the intrinsic greatness of all these works than the disagreement of the foremost critics as to which of them is the greatest. Goedeke would award the palm to "Medea." He says of the heroine: "Gigantic as Grillparzer's Medea is, she remains within the bounds of humanity, and in this respect throws all the Medeas of the tragic stage of ancient and modern times into the shade." Volkelt finds greater power in the diction of "Ein treuer Diener seines Herrn" than in that of any of the other dramas. Scherer calls Rudolph II. in "Ein Bruderzwist in Habsburg" an "unsurpassable masterpiece." Fäulhammer speaks of certain scenes in "Die Jüdin von Toledo" as among the best in German litera-

ture. O. E. Lessing, in characterizing "König Ottokars Glück und Ende," places Grillparzer, as we have seen, above Schiller. Sauer lavishes the highest praise on the exquisite humor of "Weh dem, der lügt," and adds: "Its fundamental depth of thought, the nobility of its verse and its fantastic and fairy-like execution, give it a place of its own in our literature akin to that occupied by Shakespeare's fairy plays." Ehrhard writes of "Libussa": "Freed from the tyranny of the theatre, Grillparzer gave full scope to his inspiration. With a magnificent sweep of his wings, he rose to the summits where he encountered the author of 'Faust.'" On the whole, popular approval and critical consensus alike point to "Des Meeres und der Liebe Wellen" as Grillparzer's most precious legacy.

One transcendent merit is common to all his plays—an artistic perfection which manifests itself alike in the conception of the plot, in exposition and development, the accuracy of character drawing, and in the thousand delicate, often startling, touches which, in a few simple words, reveal the inmost soul. No one has depicted the half-unconscious awakening of love with such naturalness and power. "In Grillparzer's dramas," says Volkelt, "love assumes, by the suddenness and impetuosity of its origin, something demoniac and irresistible."

Various critics have attempted to account for Grillparzer's extraordinary skill in depicting female characters by dwelling on the feminine traits of his own personality; but the extraordinary diversity of his creations defies such feeble efforts to explain the secret of his genius. Emil Reich has justly said, in defending him against the idle charge that his dramas lack virility and too pointedly

preach the gospel of peaceful renunciation: "Baseless indeed is the reproach that, however valuable his dramas may be from an æsthetic point of view, Grillparzer leaves our ethical craving unsatisfied." He and other discerning students of Grillparzer have pointed to the list of his manly heroes—his Rudolph, Leon, Primislaus, Bankban—as the most convincing proof that, dramatically as well as ethically, he placed nobility of action above passive resignation. And the poet himself wrote in his diary: "It is the duty of every one to devote himself to the service of mankind with whatever powers he may possess; we are here to do and to be useful."




It would be misjudging the full significance of Grillparzer's works not to recognize in them the character joined to the genius—the man who, oppressed by nature with morbid traits which had proved fatal to mother and brother, fought manfully against their blighting influence; who, through poverty and persecution, maintained his lofty pride and his disdain of ignoble means of winning rank and recognition; who devoted the meagre returns of his pen to the support of unworthy relatives; whose intense Austrian patriotism never blinded him to the faults of his compatriots, and who welcomed light and inspiration from the greater fatherland which shut its doors to him; whose conservatism found no room for political or religious bigotry; who despised the worship of nationality because he loved humanity; whose views of revolutionary movements and whose distrust of salvation through violence arose from his conviction of the value of self-restraint; who, surrounded by levity and opposed by folly, found silent solace in gathering wisdom from the stores of the past, hoping

to retain, as he wrote, the "desire to learn until two hours before death." Nor were the trials of his literary life merely such as have beset the paths of so many men of genius; it was his peculiar fate to be most severely criticised where he knew he deserved warmest praise. Emil Reich aptly remarks: "Where every other poet would have met with enthusiastic approval, there always was sure to arise some objection to his works, entirely unconnected with their nature or but remotely bearing on their subject, which deprived him of the full recognition due him." Grillparzer was, in the words of Volkelt, "the first to place before the Austrians, on the stage, in masterly fashion, the history of their country, and yet he was treated coolly and disdainfully, and it was precisely his patriotic plays that met with least popular appreciation."

But when every allowance has been made for the disappointments of his life, it may be doubted whether a more generous meed of outward success in his own fatherland, or a fuller recognition of his merits throughout the literary world, would have essentially modified his inward nature, or in any way affected the quality of his art. The defects of his character were those of his ancestors, as well as those of his time, while his genius was his own, and rose superior to his inheritance and his surroundings. No one, as we have seen, could have placed a juster estimate than he did on the value of unbiassed public criticism, and he searchingly applied his keenest critical powers to his own works; but where he knew that his verdict was wiser than that of the public, he was quite content to leave the final decision to posterity. He wrote, first and last, to please himself, and in obedience to his literary conscience. And

how exacting were the demands of his poetic nature, how sure and steady and chaste the tracings of that artistic hand that wrought in silent perfection when his early triumphs seemed forgotten and no one could foretell his glorious resurrection in old age!

Much critical ingenuity has been spent in the attempt to determine the final rank which Grillparzer is destined to occupy among the world's great dramatists. He has been assigned to one literary school and another, and the origin of various modern intellectual movements has been traced to his influence. He has been called the precursor of present-day realism, and characterized as "the last of the classics and the first of the moderns." But all his critics, whatever their point of view, have acknowledged the potency of his unique creations, that weave their spell about us, whether groping in dreamy irresolution or leaping into fiery passion. Grillparzer himself, with his sane and clear recognition of his merits, has claimed a place in German literature next to Goethe and Schiller, and posterity has fully ratified this claim. Prof. Jakob Minor, in his address at the centenary of Grillparzer's birth, has truly said: "German literature possesses no other dramatic poet in whose works there is such complete accord between substance and form, between poetic power and dramatic requirement. No one else has so consistently refused to make the slightest concession to the claims of the stage and the art of the actor."



It was Grillparzer's absolute freedom from scholastic precept and hoary tradition that enabled him to create dramatic types of unsurpassed originality. In the breadth of his poetic horizon, as well as in depth of intellectual

